THOMSON MULTI MEDIA

February 4, 2002

Mr. John Ashcroft
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Mr. Michael Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Ashcroft and Mr. Powell:

As one of America's largest manufacturers and marketers of home entertainment products, Thomson multimedia endorses the proposed merger of EchoStar and Hughes Electronics as a move that will strengthen multichannel options for consumers in a fiercely competitive market.

Thomson supports industry developments that promote the broad deployment of digital video signals, whether by satellite, cable, terrestrial broadcast, DSL, or by packaged media such as DVD.   Thomson believes that a strong digital video industry will provide many new options for consumers, particularly when new services and programming options are offered on multiple platforms and through a variety of retail and lease channels.

Additionally, as one of the leading proponents of digital high-definition television, Thomson believes the EchoStar and Hughes Electronics merger will advance the digital TV transition. It is our understanding that EchoStar has committed to greatly expand the number of available high-definition programming channels on a combined satellite platform. Such a competitive move should invigorate other operators in the cable and terrestrial TV business to offer more HDTV programming to consumers.

A more aggressive rollout of digital HDTV programming will serve the public interest by giving consumers another reason to make the switch to a digital TV receiver, facilitating the timely return of broadcast spectrum for auction and other public use.

For these reasons, we believe that the proposed Echostar/Hughes merger is good for consumers, competition, and the public interest. As such, we encourage you to approve the transaction.

Sincerely yours,

David H. Arland
Director – Public & Trade Relations
Thomson multimedia