

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in new brighton, MN which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company. Frankly, I am baffled by the response of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau. First, they decry the lack of cable service to rural customers and then they bemoan the opportunity to have access to satellite broadcasting because of the monopoly it would create - what monopoly! If cable isn't available and satellite offers programming without the threat of gouging the consumer what have they got to lose?

I can offer local broadcast channels to all of my customers when they subscribe to the DISH Network. This is not the case for retailers in medium and small-sized markets. Currently, EchoStar offers local broadcast service in only 36 television markets. The merger will allow the new company to end the duplication of programming and free up hundreds of channels allowing consumers in all 210 television markets across the country to receive their local broadcast channels. As a DISH Network retailer, I am very excited by this development because satellite TV will be perceived nationally as real alternative to cable.

For my customers who do enjoy access to high-speed DSL and cable Internet service, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, because the new EchoStar will provide an affordable high speed Internet access service via satellite. This would help drive down prices of the DSL and cable providers. For those living beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires, the new EchoStar would be their only chance of affordable high speed Internet service.

My customers chose satellite TV over cable because of its superior customer service, better quality picture and sound, and the abundance of channel options. However, cable companies now offer digital cable in millions of homes. This has negated the past advantages of satellite over cable TV and has begun to hurt EchoStar and DIRECTV's ability to compete. The new company will have the resources, spectrum and satellites necessary to offer a competitive satellite TV product, improving customer service and keeping cable prices in check.

Since its inception, direct broadcast satellite TV providers have offered uniform, nationwide pricing structures, and the new company has guaranteed that it will continue this practice. Nationwide pricing offers customers in rural America the full benefits of the rigorous competition occurring in urban and suburban areas. I can rest assured that satellite TV will remain a competitively priced product.

Please support the merger between EchoStar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics. There are many benefits of the merger, but I believe that most importantly, the new company will increase competition with cable and help hold down cable rate increases. These savings, in turn, will be passed along to customers, which will be good for my business.

Sincerely,

tom osmond
401 county road e2
new brighton, MN 55112