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P. O. Box 756  
Natchitoches, Louisiana 71458-0756  
E-Mail: larep023@legis.state.la.us  
Telephone: (318) 357-7048  
(888) 718-3414  
Fax: (318) 357-7044

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
T. TAYLOR TOWNSEND  
District 23  
February 18, 2002

Insurance  
House Executive Committee  
Ways and Means  
Legislative Audit Advisory Council  
Joint Legislative Committee  
on Capital Outlay

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Chairman Michael Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D. C. 20554

01-348

Docket # 01-348

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to encourage you to support the pending merger between EchoStar and Direct TV. This merger will provide many benefits to most Americans.

The merger between EchoStar and Direct TV will bring virtual third line, similar to the bundled offerings of video and data by cable, into the homes that cable has deemed too expensive to serve. The merger creates economies of scale necessary to offer competitively priced, high-speed Internet access via satellite to my rural areas, especially businesses and school that do not have access to cable modem service or DSL.

The digital divide that exists beyond our inner cities, into rural areas of Louisiana will no longer exist with the merger of this new company. Many rural citizens do not receive local broadcast signals using an antenna, and are not served by cable. The merged companies will provide more programming choices, lower costs, and better customer service that what is currently available from cable companies.

For many rural Americans, this merger offers the most realistic chance of bringing an affordable high-speed Internet access service into their homes. I encourage you to review the facts and give it your approval.

Sincerely,

T. Taylor Townsend  
Louisiana House of Representatives  
District 23

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