

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing you today in support of the EchoStar (Dish Network- Hughes-GM Direct TV merger

As you know several years back Congress and the FCC made Digital TV the new standard for Television.

About a year and a half ago, not wanting to be too far behind the times, I purchased a new HDTV set at a cost of \$3,000.00 plus a HDTV receiver at a cost of \$700.00.

This may not seem much to some people but to me, having retired from Goodyear - Gadsden some four years ago and have recently past my 65th. birthday, this seems like a major investment to me. So I feel like I have done my part to usher in the Digital age.

FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell seems to be doing all he can to get the digital ball rolling.

Now we come to the Local Network Broadcast Stations. They seem to be dragging their feet when it comes to sending out digital signal. I was able to get a reply to one e-mail (most stations won't reply to e-mails). A engineer at Fox 6 in Birmingham stated that Fox 6 planned to start broadcasting digital on May 1, 2002 with about 1000 watts and in about a year hoped to reach full power of one million watts. He also stated due to distance and terrain the signal may not reach the Glencoe - Gadsden areas.

So here I sit in the Birmingham DMA (designated market area) with little or no chance of getting a off-air signal. The best hope I have of getting additional HDTV is through satellite. Dish Networks CEO Charlie Ergen states they are running out of capacity for New Channels. So short of filling the sky's with additional satellites the best solution would be to OK the merger.

Please do what you can to speed the merger up as I'm getting older by the min. (but can still make it to the polls)

Yours Truly;

Sincerely,

Billy Walker
800 East River View
Glencoe, AL 35905