

FEB. 14. 2002 4:00PM

NO. 8664 P. 1/2

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House of Representatives

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FROM: Laurin Groover

REFERENCE: Constituent Concern

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THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OF SOUTH CAROLINA, INC.

*The Association of South Carolina's Consumer Owned Electric Cooperatives
Which Serve More Than 1.3 Million Citizens*

January 2, 2002

The Honorable Joe Wilson
U. S. House of Representatives
1700 Sunset Boulevard
West Columbia, SC 29169

Dear Congressman Wilson:

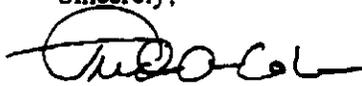
The proposed merger of EchoStar (the DISH Network) and Hughes Electronics (Direct TV) could have a detrimental impact on rural consumers who depend on satellite television service. As of today, at least 88 members of the House, both Democrats and Republicans, have signed onto the Emerson-Clayton letter to the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission requesting a stringent review of this proposed merger. I am asking that you sign onto this letter as well.

Presently, EchoStar and Hughes are the only two providers of Direct Broadcast Satellite services (video and high-speed Internet) in the market today. Many households in rural areas do not have access to cable television services and must rely on satellites for their multi-channel video programming. Rural consumers that currently have a choice between two fiercely competitive satellite providers will be subjected to an unchecked monopoly provider if the merger is approved without appropriate consumer protections.

I encourage you to contact the Department of Justice and Federal Communications Commission to ask that they strictly review this proposed merger to insure that rural consumers do not suffer the consequences of higher prices, fewer choices and reduced services. The strict enforcement of consumer safeguards regarding price, quality and access to vital telecommunication-services must be part of any merger approval between EchoStar and Hughes.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please let me know if you have any questions. You can also contact the office of Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,



Fred A. Cole
President & Chief Executive Officer

jmw
Copy: Washington Office