

March 22, 2002

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

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to ask for your support of the pending merger of EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics, also referred to in some cases simply as DirecTV. I see a number of consumer advantages to this joining of forces and believe it will benefit not only my constituents, but also consumers throughout the nation.

Should the merger be approved, consumers would have access to more services through the combined company than would otherwise be available. This would include not only more channels to choose from, but also more different types of television offerings. Examples of such services would be greatly expanded high-definition television, pay-per-view and video-on-demand. Specialty programming as well as foreign language broadcasts would also become part of the mix.

The benefits of this merger don't just include more television programming. High-speed Internet access will be an additional service offering to customers of the combined company. Because of the high bandwidth capabilities of this technology, all customers will be able to tap into the Internet at download speeds dramatically faster than the dial-up service that many are now forced to use. This would represent an extraordinary advance for many of our rural communities where cable modems and DSL service are not likely to be available anytime soon.

Another significant aspect of this planned merger can be found by looking at the scope of operations of the new company. Most importantly, my constituents in rural areas who may not have cable as an alternative will now be able to receive their local news with the addition of all of Ohio's northwest television markets.

I would like to thank you for your continued service and for your willingness to consider my position; I firmly believe that by approving this merger, services to Northwest Ohio will be upgraded.

Sincerely,

Lynn R. Wachtmann
1st District