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September 6, 2006

~~Bruce Harris~~  
~~20002 River Rd~~  
~~Mill City, Oregon 97260~~

Dear Mr. ~~Harris~~:

Thank you for contacting me about the availability of Dish Network distant television stations. I appreciate hearing from you.

As you may know, Echostar, which owns Dish Network, was found in May to have been illegally providing distant network signals to customers. Current satellite law requires that if a consumer may receive local signals "over-the-air," then it is illegal to give those consumers distant signals instead. This is because community businesses that advertise on local broadcast stations would otherwise be deprived of reaching their local market, hurting the area's economy. The court ruling in this dispute could potentially shut off all Dish Network distant station signals, not just those sent to customers who can receive over-the-air signals. While the court ruling appears to be the correct ruling under law, I am concerned about the effect the court's decision could have on Echostar customer's who were properly receiving distance signals but will have their signal turned off anyway.

The parties to this dispute have worked hard to negotiate a compromise that will not shut off customers signals. Most of the major broadcasters and Echostar have negotiated a settlement that will protect consumers. However, one major broadcaster has refused to sign on to this settlement, which is Fox. Instead, Fox and its corporate parent, News Corporation, are pressing the court to move forward with its decision and shut off all Dish Network distant station signals.

My staff and I have had many meetings with the broadcasters, Echostar and News Corporation since the court decision was announced to try and get the parties to the table for negotiations to protect consumers, and I was pleased to learn of the successful negotiations between most of the broadcasters and Echostar to protect consumers. However, I have still have concerns about the actions of Fox News Corporation in refusing to sign onto this settlement and what this may mean for consumers.

Again, thank you for keeping me apprised of issues that are important to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

rw/jaj

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