

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3501

August 4, 2011

The Honorable Eric H. Holder
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Attorney General Holder and Chairman Genachowski:

As a member of the House Subcommittee on Intellectual Property, Competition and the Internet, I am writing in regard to the proposed merger of AT&T and T-Mobile. When assessing the effects this merger will have on wireless services and consumers, I urge you to carefully consider the capabilities for the regional and rural wireless carriers to continue providing consumers with competitive alternatives to the national providers' service offerings.

These smaller carriers currently provide important competitive choice to consumers across the country. In order to ensure consumers still have viable options, it is especially important to examine the impact of this proposed merger on regional and rural wireless service providers' opportunities to secure the vital inputs including spectrum, roaming and handsets, necessary for their operation.

The regional and rural carriers have become an important part of the competitive national wireless mosaic. These small carriers have purchased spectrum and have made substantial capital investment in their networks to offer voice and wireless broadband services. They are also important economic engines in terms of continued infrastructure investment and job creation, both within their own footprints as well as across the telecommunications supplier chain.

However, it is important to remember that like the national carriers, the regional carriers also need access to spectrum appropriate for continued deployment of competitive services within their networks. Moreover, the regional and rural carriers must rely on roaming agreements with the national carriers in order to provide coast-to-coast service when their customers travel outside the carriers' regional footprints.

If the merger goes through, a vast amount of the most valuable spectrum for deployment of advanced services will be controlled by one carrier. In addition, elimination of the alternative roaming partner for the regional and rural providers that utilize GSM technology will greatly impact the regional and rural wireless providers. While I do not take a position on the merger, I do believe the concerns mentioned above warrant careful examination of the proposed merger by both the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress