April 19, 2012

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

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We support your efforts to increase the amount of wireless spectrum available for next-generation broadband services. Success in this endeavor will help many more Americans have better access to broadband, improved service, and more choice. At the same time, many companies will invest in new technology and infrastructure, creating high-quality jobs in the process. One such company could be Hughes Network Systems of Germantown, Maryland, which is working with its parent company, EchoStar (an affiliate of DISH Network), to develop satellite/terrestrial hybrid wireless broadband platforms.

We have endeavored in Congress to ensure that the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") would not be restricted in its ability to put satellite spectrum to use as a means of delivering wireless broadband. Most recently, as members of the conference committee on the Middle Class Tax Relief & Job Creation Act of 2012 (H.R. 3630), we supported adoption of spectrum legislation that would not tie the FCC's hands in allocating Mobile Satellite Service ("MSS") spectrum for terrestrial use.

We were pleased by the FCC's unanimous adoption a rulemaking order last month that might let MSS S-Band licensees provide terrestrial broadband service in a more efficient manner than current rules permit. This is precisely the type of action the FCC can and should take when Congress allows an expert agency to use its best judgment on highly technical matters. We encourage the Commission to complete the rulemaking as expeditiously as possible.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact either of us directly, or have your staff contact Gray Maxwell (Cardin) at 202/224-4524 or Ken Cummings (Van Hollen) at 202/225-5341.

Sincerely,

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

BLC: dgm