



**For Immediate Release
September 4, 2002**

**Contact: Adriana Alarcon
 202-546-0008**

Latino Leaders Call on the Justice Department to Oppose Satellite TV Monopoly

-- Merger Would Limit Access to Spanish Language Programming --

Washington, D.C. – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) and the Hispanic Business Roundtable (HBR) today called on the U.S. Department of Justice to oppose the proposed merger of EchoStar Communications Corporation and Hughes Electronics Corporation. The Boards of both organizations believe that allowing EchoStar to become a monopoly gatekeeper and monopsony purchaser for these services would likely lead to an increase in prices and decrease in innovation and diversity. “Both the Department of Justice and the Federal Communications Commission should act quickly and decisively to block the proposed transaction,” said TLC President Robert Deposada.

Satellite services are inherently able to cover large areas, and therefore satellite operators are able to aggregate potential customers from dispersed populations in a way that makes more foreign language and other niche services economically compelling. “For that reason, Direct Broadcast Satellite (“DBS”) operators are a primary source of Spanish- language news, information, and entertainment for Hispanics nationwide – and the only source of multi-channel Spanish-language programming virtually everywhere,” said HBR President Mario Rodriguez. “Accordingly, continued access to a full and varied menu of Spanish-language DBS programming at reasonable prices is a primary concern for Latinos.”

The proposed merger would end DBS competition and create a single DBS operator for America – a perfect monopoly in areas un-served by cable, a virtual monopoly for those dependent upon Spanish-language services not provided by cable, and a monopsony purchaser in the market for Spanish-language programming. And because EchoStar and DirecTV hold the licenses to all of the DBS channels allocated to the United States that are capable of serving the entire country, there is little chance that a new entrant will emerge to challenge this DBS powerhouse.

“Thus, unless the merger is blocked, EchoStar will become the gatekeeper with complete control over the available video options for millions of Hispanics and other underserved consumers across the country,” Deposada added. “To date, EchoStar’s Spanish- language offerings have been far inferior to DirecTV’s. If it were to exercise monopsony power in the Spanish-language programming market in this country, EchoStar would further depress the output of such programming, with predictable decreases in quality and diversity.”

“Latinos have experienced first-hand the negative consequences of monopolies,” Deposada added. “The creation of this giant satellite monopoly would jeopardize access to programming to millions of Hispanic families that depend on Spanish-language television for their news and entertainment. That explains why in our most recent survey, almost 70% of Latinos opposed this merger.”

The Latino Coalition is a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C. TLC was established to address policy issues that directly affect the well-being of Hispanics in the United States. For more information on the organization or on this issue, please visit our website at www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

###

**725 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E. • Washington, DC 20002
202-546-0008 Tel. • 202-546-0807 Fax • www.TheLatinoCoalition.com**