

FCC says AT&T; / T-Mobile merger not in the public interest, requests formal administrative hearing - The Verge

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The FCC will request a formal administrative hearing on the AT&T and T-Mobile merger after the DOJ's antitrust lawsuit is done.

By Nilay Patel, editor-in-chief of the Verge, host of the Decoder podcast, and co-host of The Vergecast.

Source Wall Street Journal

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The FCC said it had "serious concerns" about the AT&T / T-Mobile merger after the Department of Justice filed an antitrust lawsuit to block the transaction, and now Chairman Julius Genachowski is doing something about them: he's officially voicing his opposition to the deal and requesting a formal administrative hearing after the lawsuit is done. Genachowski told reporters today that letting AT&T buy T-Mobile isn't in the public interest and that thousands of jobs will be lost in the aftermath, but that both sides will be allowed to make their case in the "hearing-like" trial that'll be held if the DOJ is unsuccessful in blocking the merger. The request for hearing is still in the draft stages, as it has to be approved by the other Commissioners, but we've got a feeling it'll go through.

Overall, it's a weaker move from a weaker agency, but it's what the FCC can do — and it's yet another major roadblock for AT&T and T-Mobile, who have faced widespread opposition to their merger plans since they were first announced. For its part, AT&T just issued the following statement expressing disappointment and pledging to review all options:

The FCC's action today is disappointing. It is yet another example of a government agency acting to prevent billions in new investment and the creation of many thousands of new jobs at a time when the US economy desperately needs both. At this time, we are reviewing all options.

Things are getting pretty grim — we'll let you know as we hear more.

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