

Dish chief: Pay TV mergers needed to offset fees

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Dish Network Chairman Charlie Ergen says that if the government doesn't act to curb the power of TV networks in fee disputes, pay TV distributors may have to merge to even the playing field.

Ergen made the comments during a conference call with investors Tuesday following Dish's announcement that it posted a second-quarter loss.

His comments also came as a fee dispute between Time Warner Cable and CBS dragged on for a fifth day. The fight has resulted in a blackout of CBS programming to some 3 million Time Warner Cable subscribers in New York, Los Angeles and Dallas.

Ergen called major entertainment groups "essentially monopolies" and said customers are losing out because programming costs are rising faster than the rate of inflation.

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