

Coalition to Save Our GPS

Uniting to Protect GPS - A National Utility for More than 30 Years



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Coalition Expands as FCC Decision Nears

FedEx, the New York City Fire Department, BoatUS, the Associated General Contractors of America, the Experimental Aircraft Owners Association, the Association of American Railroads and the Air Line Pilots Association Sign on to Fight GPS Interference Concerns

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 28, 2011 – The Coalition to Save Our GPS announced today that its membership continues to grow, with major national organizations joining companies and trade associations concerned about a plan that will dramatically interfere with the Global Positioning System (GPS). More than 100,000 companies and millions of employees are represented in the Coalition, either independently or through their trade associations.

The new members – representing a variety of concerned industries including public safety, aviation, transportation, construction, technology, recreation, shipping, agriculture and consumer manufacturers – are concerned about a serious threat that the plans of a company called LightSquared pose to GPS, a national utility upon which millions of Americans rely every day. Earlier this month, results of two separate tests of LightSquared's impact on the GPS signal were discussed at a National Space-Based PNT Advisory Board meeting. The results were devastating. In 46 tests "all the GPS receivers" were affected by LightSquared's signals, according to Deane Bunce, a Federal Aviation Administration official.

An FCC-mandated GPS Working Group was scheduled to submit its final report on interference to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on June 15 but LightSquared requested and was granted a two week extension, which means the final report is now due July 1. A public comment period will follow, prior to the FCC making its final determination.

While the overall report was delayed, the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) proceeded with the release of its working group's study, which it submitted for inclusion in the overall report. NPSTC, a federation of public safety organizations whose mission is to improve public safety communications, reported that "the testing confirmed that interference to public safety operations will occur. . . ." It said that, "Denial-of-GPS-Service to portable devices represents perhaps the largest concern to the Public Safety market. Officers rely on 'Man-Down' signaling for immediate response under life and death situations," adding that, "In certain circumstances, an officer may be unable to voice their location; GPS is the only backup they may have for rescue or aid." NPSTC said that while

LightSquared has pledged to fund equipment replacement for some infrastructure, portable devices such as those used in “Man-Down” signaling were not included.

In its conclusions, NPSTC made clear the huge stakes posed by any interference to GPS, referring to calls made to E-911 systems by cell phones: “If a caller is unable to speak or the call is being made from a weak signal such that the call taker has difficulty in understanding the caller, every second delayed in determining the caller’s location may be the difference between life and death. The same applies to Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Fire/Rescue and law enforcement vehicles when they are en route to a scene or transporting patients to the closest available hospitals. Other than delays associated with an initial cold start of a GPS, the time to first fix for public safety applications should be zero.”

Speaking today on behalf of the Association of American Railroads, its vice president for communications, Patricia Reilly, said, “The railroad industry would suffer irreparable harm because the LightSquared plan will seriously interfere with the ability of users to receive signals from the GPS satellites.”

Reece Langley, vice president of legislative affairs at the USA Rice Federation, another new member, made this point: “Like most of production agriculture, precision technologies are a critical component of rice production. Rice producers rely on GPS for field operations, including planting, spraying, harvesting and field leveling for efficient irrigation. The effectiveness of precision agriculture technologies is dependent on a functioning GPS. Any interference with this signal will cause serious interruption to the efficient production practices of U.S. rice producers.”

The threat to GPS stems from a highly unusual decision by the FCC to grant a conditional waiver allowing the dramatic expansion of terrestrial use of the satellite spectrum immediately neighboring that of GPS, potentially causing severe interference to millions of GPS receivers. The conditional waiver was granted to LightSquared. For more information, including a full list of members, please see the Coalition’s site, www.saveourgps.com.

New members announced today include AGCO, Agricultural Retailers Association, Air Line Pilots Association Intl., American Petroleum Institute, Associated General Contractors of America, Association of American Geographers, Association of American Railroads, Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, FedEx, California Land Surveyors Association, California Space Authority, Inside GNSS, GrowMark, Magellan GPS, National Agricultural Aviation Association, National Cotton Council of America, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, New York City Fire Department, New World Systems, North American Equipment Dealers Association, Reinke Manufacturing Company and USA Rice Federation.

Concern continues to grow as independent tests conclusively demonstrate that the LightSquared network will result in serious interference with GPS. In the absence of any viable technical solution, the “Coalition to Save Our GPS” holds the position that LightSquared should not be allowed to operate in the spectrum adjacent to GPS and that efforts should be focused on finding a new band where LightSquared can operate without interfering with GPS.

About the Coalition

The “Coalition to Save Our GPS” is working to resolve a serious threat to the Global Positioning System. The FCC granted a highly unusual conditional waiver for a proposal to build 40,000 ground stations that

could cause widespread interference with GPS signals – endangering a national utility which millions of Americans rely on every day. The conditional waiver was granted to a company called LightSquared.

www.SaveOurGPS.org

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