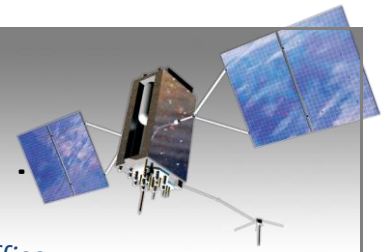


GPS

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Information for Policymakers from the National Coordination Office
for Space-Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT)

Late July 2011



Air Force Successfully Launches Second GPS IIF Satellite into Orbit

On July 16, a Delta IV rocket successfully launched the GPS IIF-2 satellite into orbit from Cape Canaveral, Florida. It is the second of twelve GPS Block IIF satellites being built by Boeing to support GPS modernization. The IIF series adds a third civilian GPS signal for increased reliability and accuracy, especially for NextGen and other transportation safety applications. GPS IIF is also essential to constellation sustainment, as many current GPS satellites have greatly exceeded their design life spans. To learn more about GPS IIF and other generations of GPS satellites, visit <http://www.gps.gov/systems/gps/space>.

CJS Approps Bill Addresses LightSquared-GPS Interference

House appropriators included report language in the FY 2012 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Act (H.R. 2596) directing the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to inform Congress of the scientific steps necessary to address any potential GPS interference concerns related to the planned LightSquared 4G network. This action, due August 1, was included in the July 13 committee report in response to the technical working group report on GPS interference that LightSquared submitted to the FCC on June 30. For information on LightSquared-related legislation, visit <http://www.pnt.gov/policy/legislation>.

Hearings Scheduled on LightSquared Interference to GPS

Two House committees will hold hearings on August 3 regarding the GPS interference threat posed by the planned LightSquared network. The House Armed Services Committee will focus on potential military impacts. The House Science, Space and Technology Committee will examine the effects on scientific applications. Witnesses from FCC, NTIA, DoD, DOT, NOAA, NASA, and USGS are scheduled to testify.

GPS Privacy Issues Draw Congressional, Judicial Attention

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review whether a warrant is needed to use GPS to track criminal suspects. Numerous court cases around the country have been either overturned or upheld due to inconsistent interpretations of the Fourth Amendment with regard to GPS-based suspect tracking.

Partly in response to the conflicting court rulings, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) recently introduced the Geolocation Privacy and Surveillance Act (S. 1212/H.R. 2168), which would require law enforcement to obtain a warrant before using GPS to track suspects. The bill, known as the "GPS Act," would provide greater clarity on what kinds of GPS-based tracking activities and data disclosures are legal/illegal.

Application Spotlight: Combating Wildfires



GPS has played an important role in the ongoing struggle to control the record wildfires in Arizona and New Mexico. Firefighters use GPS to track the spread of the blazes, assess the geography of areas in their path, and coordinate the efforts of hundreds of personnel and assets throughout large areas.



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