Government Study Confirms GPS Interference from LightSquared Wireless Network

The National Space-Based PNT Systems Engineering Forum (NPEF) has completed a study of interference to GPS users from the broadband network being developed by LightSquared Subsidiary LLC. The study provides conclusive evidence, based on simulated and real-world testing, that LightSquared’s planned signals interrupt a broad range of GPS-based services—including farming systems, emergency vehicle dispatch, aircraft avionics, and survey operations. “Live sky” tests in New Mexico with actual LightSquared transmissions degraded GPS service on all devices tested. Analysis of the data collected indicates aircraft would lose GPS at up to 8.6 km from a LightSquared tower. The NPEF investigated various mitigation options but found no universal approach to resolve the issue for all GPS users under LightSquared’s current FCC authorization.

The NPEF study is separate from the LightSquared working group report due to the FCC June 15. For more information, visit http://www.pnt.gov/interference/lightsquared/.

Defense Authorization Language Requires LightSquared-GPS Interference Resolution


Members of Congress Issue Multiple Letters to FCC Calling for Protection of GPS

Congressional members have issued several bipartisan letters to FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski expressing concerns about the authorization of LightSquared’s network as a terrestial system operating in spectrum next to the GPS signals. These include:

- April 27: Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) of the Judiciary Committee expressed dismay in the FCC’s accelerated process and requested copies of all FCC communications with LightSquared.
- May 19: Sens. Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ben Nelson (D-NE) led 33 senators in asking the FCC to rescind its order and authorization of January 26 until LightSquared demonstrates non-interference of GPS.
- June 7: Reps. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) and Steve Austria (R-OH) led 66 House members in expressing concern about the timeline, calling for an additional public comment period, and urging the FCC to only approve LightSquared operations if the company substantively demonstrates GPS non-interference.
- June 10: Reps. Sam Graves (R-MO) and John Barrow (D-GA) led 36 members from the House General Aviation Caucus in highlighting the importance of GPS to the Next Generation Air Transportation System and the concern that LightSquared’s network may jam or disrupt avionics. Their letter asks the FCC to take all steps necessary to protect GPS without imposing additional cost burdens on GPS users.