

I am writing today to urge the FCC to reconsider granting LightSquared a waiver to operate their broadband signal near the GPS band. I am currently a college student conducting flight training for my instrument rating out of the Montgomery County Airpark. During recent years, GPS has become almost inseparable from instrument procedures, allowing pilots to shoot approaches into many smaller airports that would be otherwise unavailable when operating under instrument meteorological conditions. Consequently, the safety margin has increased; if an instrument pilot incurs an in-flight emergency and must land immediately, his options regarding potential airports at which to land are far greater than if he could only choose from VOR or ILS approaches, which are based mainly at medium to large airports. In the same vein, the addition of GPS approaches to the standard instrument procedures serves to further simplify instrument flying and allows for a greater number of aircraft to utilize any approach at any given time. GPS also makes VFR flight much safer and dramatically increases the situational awareness of any pilot. Flying in the D.C. SFRA, I have first-hand experience of this. As long as the GPS database is updated regularly, it clearly shows any and all restricted or prohibited areas and allows pilots to avoid an F-15 escort to an unplanned landing. And this is all just the beginning. GPS is a relatively new phenomenon in general aviation aircraft, and the technology definitely has not even come close to reaching its full potential. If it were wiped out by LightSquared's broadband signal, which the tests have indubitably confirmed would happen, the growth that would have otherwise been unhindered would be severely stunted. I cannot stress enough how valuable of an asset GPS is to all aspects of flying, especially with the new feature-laden handhelds and touch-screen systems. It would be unjust to deprive an entire sector of such a great innovation for the sake of broadband proliferation. While I am not saying that increasing the scope of broadband communications is unnecessary, I strongly believe that there is a better way to go about doing so. Filters have not been shown to make a difference, so the only option would be for LightSquared to find a new frequency on which to broadcast its signal. In the long run, I feel that it would be more prudent to have LightSquared alter their signal rather than GPS, since GPS has been operating on its respective channels for quite some time. Just imagine how many people on a daily basis utilize GPS for some sort of activity; be it aviation, land navigation, surveying, or police officers using the GPS signal of a phone to track a lost hiker. I implore the FCC to fully consider the tremendous negative impact granting LightSquared a waiver would have on the people around the country. Thank you.