I hold an Amateur Extra and General Radio telephone License. I have 30 years experience in Air Force communications and maintenance and through IEEE was on the NMEA 2000 design committer. I am now a full-time riverboat captain.

I urge you, in the strongest terms possible, to protect GPS from ANY and ALL sources of interference including but not limited to the LightSquared proposed network. On our 300 passenger vessel we have both 3rd Generation Broadband Radar and GPS chartplotter, The Tennessee River is so crooked and narrow that we use the radar on very short range plus the chartplotter on longer range to see when a sharp bend is coming at us. On my 42 footer we only have a chartplotter which we rely on heavily in fog and heavy rain. Safe navigation without GPS would be very difficult. Off shore LORAN was OK but we don?t even have that now. Inland GPS is essential.

We in the passenger vessel industry are absolutely dedicated to safe navigation and the loss of RELIABLE GPS would be extremely detrimental to our operations. Even with the very best weather forecasting we occasionally get caught in low visibility conditions. Especially during those times we rely heavily on GPS and Radar. GPS chartplotters also assist in route planning and insure that we can achieve the necessary schedule ETAs even if we have to hold for a downbound vessel.

We fully realize that wireless and broadband communications are necessary. We use wireless tablet PCs for passenger check-in from our on-line ticket sales system. In the military, I dealt with up to 5th order interference products from multiple 1kw HF sideband, VHF ground communications, UHF air to ground, Megawatt Radar and satellite communications. I know that frequency allocation/planning can be a VERY DIFFICULT and somewhat inexact science at times. None the less, I urge you to protect the reliability of GPS and WAAS from degradation by other bandwidth requirements. It will take some time for ALL of our marine charts to catch up to the available +/- 15 foot GPS accuracy (re Costa Concordia) of modern ECDIS equipment. That chart improvement effort is expensive and can not likely be justified or achieved if we lose GPS as a mapping tool. Provide wireless buy PLEASE, PLEASE not at the expense of marine navigational safety.