

John A. Berol
8521 Avenida de las Ondas
La Jolla CA 92037

Monday, February 27, 2012

Via Electronic Comment Filing System
The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Proceeding Number 11-109

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Please do not permit newfangled high powered radio signals to interfere with the weak satellite signals upon which GPS service now depends.

I appreciate the effort of LightSquared to bring new higher speed internet connections to new consumers at competitive prices; however, the first priority should be protecting dependable GPS signals. Countless persons and many industries depend on GPS for livelihood and safety.

It would be wonderful if interference with GPS signals could be avoided with an affordable and easy to install "filter" but such an abstract proposal ignores the cost and risk such a demand would impose upon the population unless given 15 years publicized notice of such a requirement.

My personal experience is as captain of a 40 foot sailboat making coastal and offshore voyages. Having to purchase newly designed GPS receivers would not be a simple matter of disposing of a mere handheld device in favor of a new version. All the navigation systems on a small cruising boat are interconnected and do not easily accept changing the design of electronic circuits. Changing one thing might entail replacing everything at an enormous cost for electronic components, carpentry, fiberglass work, and environmentally sound waste disposal.

GPS receivers are part of the Chart Plotter system for seeing the location of the boat on navigation charts. GPS receivers are also part of an Automatic Identification System (AIS) for alerting Big Ships of the location, course direction and speed of my boat. GPS receivers are on Big Ships which use AIS to provide me with the same information about them. Together the captains of Big Ships and little vessels use AIS to avoid collisions. AIS depends completely on GPS. Also, in the event of an emergency at sea I depend on GPS to tell those who might come to rescue precisely where my vessel is located. Whether an emergency call is made by radio "Mayday" or emergency locator beacon (EPIRB or PLB), without the precision of GPS, rescue is much less likely. Of course a prudent mariner does not depend on GPS alone and learns to navigate without it, but loosing dependable GPS signals would mean loosing the extraordinary extra margin of safety now provided by multiple distinct GPS dependent systems protecting vessel and crew.

Sincerely,



John A. Berol, s/v *Celtic Song*