



March 30, 2012

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Reply Comments: Public Notice (DA 12-214); IB Docket No. 11-109

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

On behalf of the members of National Farmers Union, I write to express support for public and private efforts to expand access to next-generation broadband telecommunications, Global Positioning System (GPS) and other technologies for farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

NFU has watched with interest the process by which LightSquared has sought approval to invest billions of dollars in a national satellite/terrestrial-wireless network that would provide wireless broadband access throughout rural America. Farmers and ranchers need this important service in order to compete and thrive in today's marketplace.

It should also be noted that GPS-equipped machinery and other devices play an increasingly important role in farming and ranching by enabling precision agriculture. Due to concerns that LightSquared's network interferes with GPS, it seems unlikely that LightSquared's previous plans for deployment can continue.

However, we urge the Commission not to view this issue as an "either/or" decision, but rather as a technical challenge to be solved. The promise of a new and effective wireless network should not be squandered. We would support the Commission leading in a process to move the LightSquared network to alternative spectrum that does not pose an interference problem.

LightSquared represents an opportunity to establish an improved national wireless network that will help bridge the digital divide separating rural areas from the rest of America. If this privately funded enterprise is denied a chance to be implemented, it will surely be difficult for other private investors to invest the billions of dollars needed to develop a wireless network from scratch to reach the most remote areas of our country.

Farmers and ranchers need wireless broadband and GPS. One without the other will not be adequate in the rapidly changing agriculture industry. We believe the best way to protect existing GPS services and to provide a path toward a renewed rural wireless broadband network is to find alternate spectrum for LightSquared to begin deployment of their service. I urge the Commission to support a policy that gives America farmers an opportunity to access the benefits offered by both LightSquared and GPS.

Sincerely,



Roger Johnson, President
National Farmers Union