

Rural Proponents Come Out for Lightsquared Proposal

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A number of comments were filed today with FCC, encouraging the commission to approve Lightsquared's most recent proposal to give up 10 MHz of spectrum located closest to the GPS band and instead share spectrum currently used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). As part of the plan, Lightsquared would pair 5 MHz of spectrum at 1675-1680 MHz currently used for government weather balloons with its existing 5 MHz of spectrum at 1670-1675.

Comments filed today in support of the plan came from a variety of proponents hoping to extend wireless broadband to rural areas.

Ben Harris, a state representative from Missouri, [said \[1\]](#) rural America had been "shortchanged when compared to our large urban counterparts." Harris said that he applauded the FCC's efforts to protect GPS systems, but is impressed with Lightsquared's latest solution.

Similar sentiments were expressed by small businesses, as well as private farm owners.

Claiborne D. Adcock, owner of Bonnie Farms, expressed support of Lightsquared's plans, noting that farmers are well aware of the need to protect GPS from interference, as many of them use the technology for "precision farming."

In comments, Adcock was "supremely satisfied with Lightsquared's offer to walk away from the 10 MHz most closely located to the GPS bandwidth, and instead share use of the 5 MHz currently licensed to NOAA."

Not everyone is approving of Lightsquared's new proposal.

The Aerospace Industries Association has repeatedly [bashed \[2\]](#) Lightsquared's most recent plan to share the NOAA's spectrum, saying that Lightsquared has "neither acknowledged adequately nor has begun to analyze the potential risks" of its plan.

Lightsquared had originally put forth a plan to deploy its network in the 1525-1559 MHz band next to the GPS signal. That plan was turned down by the FCC for concerns over interference with GPS signals. Not long thereafter, Lightsquared filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

While the FCC has said it supports spectrum sharing, there are disagreements about its feasibility.

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In comments made before the subcommittee on communications and technology, Commissioner Ajit Pai expressed wariness about spectrum sharing, as opposed to clearing, saying the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) report indicates some have "given up on clearing spectrum, especially in the federally owned AWS-1 band (1755-1780 MHz), in favor of auctioning off "shared rights."

"I'm not opposed to spectrum sharing," Pai said. "For example, geographic sharing by creating exclusion zones around certain areas can be a useful tool. And spectrum sharing may be a workable alternative when auctions can't be used to raise funds for relocation, such as in higher bands like the 5 GHz band. But if our goal is to incentivize investment in wireless networks, nothing beats clearing."

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Links:

[1] <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7022097222>

[2] <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7022096365>