

September 26, 2011

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Chairman Lucas, Ranking Member Roberts and Ranking Member Peterson:

As agricultural organizations that represent farmers and ranchers, we seek to improve the economic viability of rural America. A conflict over the use of spectrum has arisen between LightSquared, a company that can provide wireless broadband access throughout rural America, and the providers and users of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, which is a key component of advances in precision agriculture. We believe that both of these technologies have great potential to drive economic development in rural America and a reasonable agreement should be reached to allow for their future success.

We support the expanded use of precision agriculture, which allows farmers and ranchers to run more efficient, economical and environmentally conscious operations. Disruption to GPS has the potential to reduce farm and ranch profitability by raising production costs. We also support robust and competitively priced broadband deployment in rural America to better serve farmers and ranchers. The full deployment of broadband access will drive economic development, better education and improved health services in rural America.

We urge your committees to communicate to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) the benefit farmers and ranchers will receive from expanded broadband access and precision agriculture. The FCC must ensure that accurate GPS will continue to be available for precision agriculture and also ensure that broadband access be made available for all of rural America.

Thank you for your efforts to allow for the continued development of both technologies.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sugar Alliance
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Farmers Union
National Potato Council
Western Growers Association

cc: Members of the House Committee on Agriculture
Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture