

April 22, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jim Inhofe  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
House Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators and Members of Congress:

The U.S. government has for decades laid the foundation for American technological leadership by embracing policies that enable continued growth of GPS and the satellite services that underpin our economy, national security, and public safety. In turn, operators of these critical satellite systems and innovative companies that have deployed communications networks and developed positioning, navigation and timing devices, systems, and applications rely on a stable environment to serve millions of commercial, federal, military, and academic users each and every day.

That foundation was upended one year ago today when the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) released the *Ligado Order*.<sup>1</sup> The opposition to the *Ligado Order* was sweeping and swift. Significantly:

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Matter of Ligado Amendment to License Modification Applications IBFS File Nos. SESMOD-20151231-00981, SAT-MOD-20151231-00090, and SAT-MOD-20151231-00091, Order and Authorization, IB Docket No. 11-109, FCC 20-48 (Apr. 22, 2020) (*Ligado Order*).

- the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) took the unprecedented step of asking the FCC to stay the initial *Ligado Order* based on the “significant and irreparable harm [that] will result” from Ligado’s proposed terrestrial network because the conditions “set forth in the *Ligado Order* largely are ineffective ... [and] cannot be implemented without significant mission impact and harm;”<sup>2</sup>
- seven parties representing a broad cross-section of industry interests joined NTIA in petitioning the FCC to reconsider its decision.<sup>3</sup> Those petitions – which remain pending – detail how the *Ligado Order* departed from decades of sound spectrum policy, jeopardizing the aerospace, agriculture, aviation, construction, ground transportation, mapping, marine, meteorological, public safety, satellite communications, and surveying industries and professionals, as well as all those who rely on L-band satellite operations; and
- Congress expressed its profound concern by passing the overwhelmingly bipartisan *William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021*<sup>4</sup> with several key provisions aimed at addressing the significant negative impacts of Ligado’s proposed service on national security and the economy. Those provisions: (1) require an independent technical review of the *Ligado Order*; (2) require the Department of Defense (“DoD”) to submit an estimate to Congress of the full range of damages caused by Ligado to the Federal government; (3) prohibit DoD from contracting with any entity that engages in terrestrial service in the L-band; and (4) prohibit DoD’s use of taxpayer funds made available via the NDAA to mitigate the damages incurred by DoD.

Although Ligado continues to attempt to convince policymakers that its proposed terrestrial service will not cause harmful interference and is somehow critical to American success in 5G, the executive branch and affected parties have repeatedly detailed the adverse economic, national security, and public safety impact of the proposed Ligado operations.<sup>5</sup> As for Ligado’s 5G fallacy, NTIA concluded that “an inability to deploy terrestrial 5G or related services using the frequencies involved in the Ligado applications would not hold back the timely deployment of 5G” across the U.S.<sup>6</sup> Tellingly, Ligado’s spectrum is not internationally harmonized for 5G, nor is it part of any 5G standard.

Yet the *Ligado Order* remains in effect, threatening to disrupt the reliability of satellite communications, the Global Positioning System, and weather forecasting services necessary for safety-of-life in commercial aviation operations, precision farming that has revolutionized the agriculture economy,

---

<sup>2</sup> Petition for Stay of NTIA, IB Docket Nos. 11-109, 12-340 (filed May 22, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> See Petitions for Reconsideration of Air Line Pilots Association, International (filed May 20, 2020); the American Transportation Builders Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and the Association of Equipment Manufacturers; Aviation Industry Organizations; Iridium Communications Inc., Flyht Aerospace Solutions Ltd., Aireon LLC, and Skytrac Systems Ltd; Lockheed Martin Corporation; NTIA; the Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation; and Trimble Inc, IB Docket Nos. 11-109 and 12-340 (filed May 22, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Pub. L. No. 116-283.

<sup>5</sup> See Memorandum from Thu Luu, Executive Agent for GPS, Department of the Air Force, to IRAC Chairman (Feb. 14, 2020); Letter from Douglas W. Kinkoph, Deputy Assistant Secretary (Acting), NTIA, to Ajit Pai, Chairman, FCC (Dec. 6, 2019) (Kinkoph Letter); Letter from Bryan N. Tramont, Counsel to Iridium, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, IB Docket Nos. 11-109, 12-340 (filed Oct. 2, 2019); Technical Analysis of Ligado Interference Impact on Iridium Aviation Services, IB Docket Nos. 11-109, 12-340, attached to Letter from Bryan N. Tramont, Counsel to Iridium, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, IB Docket Nos. 11-109, 12-340 (filed Dec. 14, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Kinkoph Letter at 2.

autonomous ground and air vehicles that will bring a new generation of transportation, precise and actionable weather data that can predict hurricanes and other life-threatening natural events. We therefore urge you to work together with the FCC to stay and ultimately set aside the *Ligado Order* – the risks to American lives and to the American economy are simply too great.

Sincerely,

AccuWeather, Inc.  
Aerospace Industries Association (AIA)  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
Air Line Pilots Association, International  
Aircraft Electronics Association  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
Aireon  
Airlines for America (A4A)  
Airo Drone  
Airo Group  
ALERT Users Group  
Allegiant Air  
American Association of Airport Executives  
American Bus Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Geophysical Union (AGU)  
American Meteorological Society (AMS)  
American Soybean Association  
American Sportfishing Association  
American Road & Transportation Builders Association  
American Trucking Associations  
American Weather and Climate Industry Association (AWCIA)  
Arizona Agricultural Aviation Association  
Arkansas Agricultural Aviation Association  
Associated Equipment Distributors  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers  
Association of Marina Industries  
Association of Montana Aerial Applicators  
Association of Washington Aerial Applicators  
Aviation Spectrum Resources, Inc.  
BoatUS  
CalAmp  
California Agricultural Aircraft Association  
Cargo Airline Association  
CNH Industrial  
CoBank  
Colorado Agricultural Aviation Association  
Cubic Corporation  
DTN  
Equipment Dealers Association  
Frontier Airlines

Florida Agricultural Aviation Association  
General Aviation Manufacturers Association  
GeoOptics, Inc.  
Georgia Agricultural Aviation Association  
Geospatial Equipment & Technology Institute (GETI)  
Helicopter Association International  
Hellen Systems  
Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association  
Intelligent Transportation Society of America  
International Air Transport Association  
Iridium  
Kansas Agricultural Aviation Association  
Lockheed Martin Corporation  
Michigan Agricultural Aviation Association  
Microcom Environmental  
Minnesota Agricultural Aircraft Association  
Narayan Strategy  
National Agricultural Aviation Association  
National Air Carrier Association  
National Air Transportation Association  
National Business Aviation Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA)  
National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS)  
National Weather Association (NWA)  
Nebraska Aviation Trades Association  
NENA: The 9-1-1 Association  
NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots (NJASAP)  
New Mexico Agricultural Aviation Association  
North Dakota Agricultural Aviation Association  
Northeast Agricultural Aviation Association  
Ohio Agricultural Aviation Association  
Oregon Agricultural Aviation Association  
Pacific Northwest Aerial Applicators Alliance  
PlanetiQ  
Regional Airline Association  
Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation  
Satelles  
The Semaphore Group

SKYTRAC  
South Dakota Aviation Association  
Space Science and Engineering Center at the  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Spirit Airlines  
Subsurface Utility Engineering Association  
(SUEA)  
Sun Country Airlines  
Tennessee Aerial Applicators Association  
Texas A&M Transportation Institute  
Texas Agricultural Aviation Association

Trimble  
U.S. Contract Tower Association  
U.S. Geospatial Executives Organization (U.S.  
GEO)  
USA Rice  
University Corporation for Atmospheric  
Research (UCAR)  
Vertical Flight Society  
Weather Elevate  
Wisconsin Agricultural Aviation Association