



Airlines for America™

We Connect the World

Testimony

**A Review of Issues Associated with Protecting and Improving Our Nation's Aviation
Satellite-Based Global Positioning System Infrastructure**

Statement of
Thomas L. Hendricks
Senior Vice President
Safety, Security And Operations
Airlines for America (A4A)
before the
Subcommittee on Aviation
of the
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

February 8, 2012

Chairman Petri, Ranking Member Costello and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting us to appear at this timely and important hearing.

The continued integrity of the Global Positioning System is critically important to the millions of customers who we fly every day, as well as to the tens of millions of other people in our country who rely on it. GPS will be the backbone of air navigation both domestically and internationally in the coming years. Interference with its accessibility or reliability would be catastrophic for civil aviation and the communities that depend on air transportation.

We deeply appreciate the Subcommittee's recognition in the FAA reauthorization bill of the importance of this technology and, particularly, your support for the continued advancement of NextGen.

With respect to the LightSquared proposal, the incontestable fact is that it will create widespread GPS interference, which will have ruinous effects on aviation. Experts have repeatedly reached that conclusion. LightSquared's proposal therefore should be withdrawn. This matter needs to be put to rest once and for all.

To be clear, we do not oppose the expansion of wireless broadband services but any expansion cannot be permitted to interfere with existing or anticipated aviation GPS use, many of which will significantly enhance safety. We are dependent on that technology; there is no substitute for it.

One obvious lesson of the convoluted experience with the LightSquared application is the need for a governmentwide policy that protects the aviation GPS spectrum. Without such an authoritative policy, spectrum encroachment will remain a threat.



Airlines for America™

We Connect the World

Testimony

THE IMPORTANCE OF GPS TO AVIATION

As the Subcommittee knows all too well, we have historically relied on a ground-based air navigation system. It is a system that has become increasingly defined by its limitations. Users of the system have, for the most part, had to fly from one ground navigation aid to the next, often resulting in circuitous routings. This inefficiency wastes time and fuel. It also restricts the number of routings that aircraft can use, which in turn constricts capacity growth.

GPS is at the heart of the ongoing, multi-billion dollar NextGen program that will shift air navigation from that outmoded terrestrial system to a modern satellite-based system. This is a transformational change.

All who are involved in it – Congress, the Federal Aviation Administration, airlines, general aviation and the Department of Defense – recognize the need for that transformation. This massive effort will result in more precise navigation, safer operations, far more direct aircraft routings, better airspace utilization and airspace capacity growth. Because of these operational improvements, there will be substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

One existing application of GPS has produced a breakthrough in the safety of airline operations: the elimination of controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) accidents for large jet aircraft in the United States. Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning Systems aboard aircraft combine GPS information with onboard terrain databases to provide flight-deck crews with look-ahead warnings of dangerous terrain. This has made air travel far safer than it was only recently and illustrates the remarkable benefits that leveraging GPS with other technologies can achieve.

The introduction in the coming decades of NextGen capabilities will be the real game-changer. Its integration of GPS with other technological innovations will create the satellite-based system of air traffic management that we all realize is so necessary. GPS is the indispensable element of this long-needed overhaul.

PROTECTING GPS FROM INTERFERENCE

Given the essential role of GPS, the federal government must develop comprehensive safeguards for aviation's use of it. The stakes are too high for the passengers and shippers that rely on air transportation, the communities and businesses that depend on air service, and airlines and their employees to leave to chance our continued ability to utilize GPS to the greatest advantage.

Consequently, we need a governmentwide policy that guides federal agencies' responses when potential interference issues emerge. That policy must make clear that interference in the aviation spectrum is prohibited and that other users cannot be permitted to encroach into the aviation spectrum.

Domestically, the most obvious place to begin to strengthen governmental policy against GPS interference is the National Executive Committee for Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT). PNT is a government organization established by presidential directive to advise and coordinate federal departments and agencies on matters concerning GPS. The PNT is



Airlines for America™

We Connect the World

Testimony

chaired jointly by the Secretaries of Defense and Transportation, and includes equivalent-level officials from the Departments of Homeland Security, State, Interior, Agriculture and Commerce.

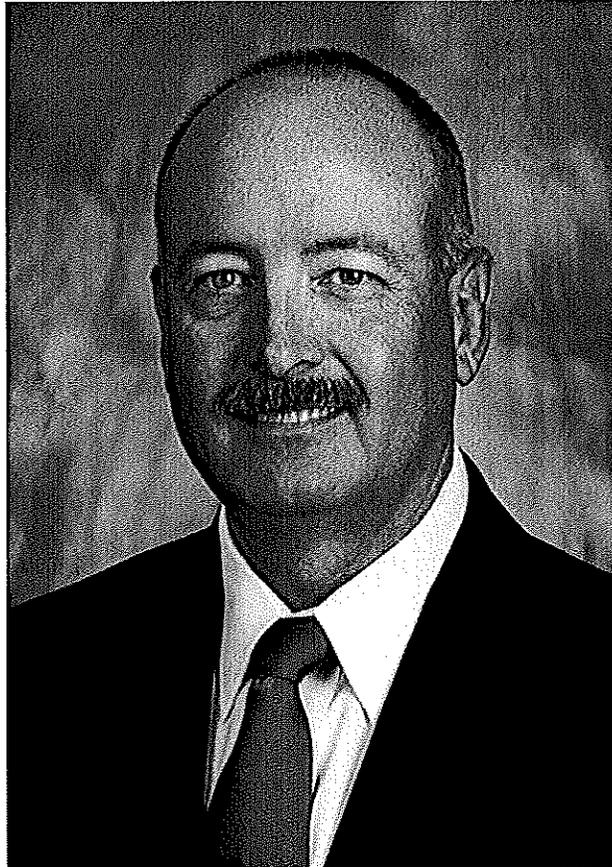
The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman participates in the PNT as a liaison. At the very least, the FCC should be required to consult with the PNT before taking action on any application to operate a terrestrial-based communications network that may affect the L-band spectrum, which is the band that GPS uses.

On the international front, U.S. government positions expressed at international conferences at which spectrum issues are considered – such as the World Radiocommunications Conference that is currently being held in Geneva – must reflect the importance of protecting the GPS spectrum throughout the world.

CONCLUSION

We appreciate the Subcommittee's interest in this vital issue. We are prepared to assist you in any way that we can.

Thomas L. Hendricks
Senior Vice President, Safety, Security and Operations
Airlines for America



Tom Hendricks was named senior vice president of safety, security and operations for Airlines for America (A4A), formerly the Air Transport Association (ATA), in February 2011. In this role, he is responsible for technical and operational functions of A4A, developing and shaping A4A member positions on flight operations, safety, engineering, air traffic management and security. In addition, he leads A4A's efforts in cargo, passenger facilitation, airport infrastructure and passenger service standards. He co-chairs both the ADS-B In Aviation Rulemaking Committee and the Working Subcommittee of the NextGen Advisory Committee. Tom also serves on the Executive Committee of the Commercial Aviation Safety Team and the Executive Board of Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing System. Hendricks joined ATA as vice president, operations and safety in April 2010.

Prior to joining A4A, Tom oversaw day-to-day flight operations at Delta Air Lines as director of line operations. As a captain, Hendricks previously served as a chief pilot in Atlanta and represented Delta on several key industry groups. He has extensive line flying experience on the Boeing 767-300ER, DC-9, Boeing 727, Lockheed L-1011 Tri Star and MD-88 aircraft.

A retired Air Force Reserve colonel and career fighter pilot, Hendricks also served on active duty as a United States Navy officer on the USS MIDWAY (CV-41) and as an instructor pilot at the United States Navy Fighter Weapons School. A native of Fairfield, Ohio, Hendricks graduated from The Citadel in Charleston, S.C. with a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics with Secondary Emphasis in Business Administration.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Truth in Testimony Disclosure

Pursuant to clause 2(g)(5) of House Rule XI, in the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include: (1) a curriculum vitae; and (2) a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. Such statements, with appropriate redaction to protect the privacy of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness appears.

(1) Name: *Thomas L. Hendricks*

(2) Other than yourself, name of entity you are representing:
Airlines For America

(3) Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government (federal, state, local) entity?

YES If yes, please provide the information requested below and attach your curriculum vitae.

NO

(4) Please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by you or by the entity you are representing:

N/A

Signature *Thomas L. Hendricks*

2/2/12
Date