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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

April 16, 2020

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The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-1000

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Secretary Esper and Chairman Pai,

I write to express my profound concern at the prospect of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) granting a license modification to Ligado Networks to develop a fifth-generation wireless technology (5G) network. Ligado's request seeks a portion of spectrum (L-Band) that is adjacent to that used for Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

The Department of Defense has made clear that providing a license to Ligado would cause unacceptable operational impacts and adversely affect the military use of GPS. As you well know, the U.S. military operates GPS satellites that provide critical precision timing and navigation to our warfighters; and GPS signals are embedded in thousands of weapons systems. Developing 5G on a portion of spectrum in such close proximity to critical GPS that would disrupt the military use of GPS carries unacceptable risk that is not outweighed by the possibility of a 5G network.

Make no mistake, I firmly support the necessity of the United States leading in the implementation of 5G networks. It is a national security imperative that the U.S. military run on reliable 5G. The aggressive rate at which China has sought to promote its 5G companies around the world presents considerable security challenges that must be addressed. Yet, while I strongly support development of the world's most robust, safe and secure network, using L-Band spectrum as Ligado's proposal requires would pose larger security risks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam Smith". The signature is stylized with large, flowing letters.

Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee