

LightSquared tries to revive broadband network

March 19 2012, By ANICK JESDANUN , AP Technology Writer

A Virginia company is trying to revive its plan for a national high-speed wireless network, arguing that it can address federal regulators' concerns over interference with GPS devices.

LightSquared's bid won't be easy. The [Federal Communications Commission](#) has decided to revoke LightSquared's permit after a federal review found that its network interfered with dozens of personal-navigation devices and aircraft-control systems that rely on GPS. LightSquared made its pleading with the FCC last week as part of public comments on the revocation plans.

LightSquared said regulators' conclusions were based on a flawed analysis by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, a federal agency that coordinates [wireless signals](#).

But even if GPS [interference](#) exists, the company said, LightSquared should have the opportunity to fix it or be given alternate wireless frequencies that would not interfere with GPS. LightSquared said it had already spent \$4 billion on the project after receiving preliminary approval and encouragement from the FCC.

The FCC had seen LightSquared's proposal as a way to make more airwaves available to feed consumers' appetites for movies, music and games on a variety of [mobile devices](#). LightSquared had hoped to compete nationally with super-fast, fourth-generation wireless services being rolled out by AT&T, Verizon Wireless and other traditional

wireless companies.

Makers of GPS devices and those who rely on them feared that GPS signals would suffer the way a radio station can get drowned out by a stronger broadcast on a nearby channel. The problem is that sensitive GPS receivers, designed to pick up relatively weak signals from space, could be overwhelmed by high-power signals from as many as 40,000 LightSquared transmitters on the ground. LightSquared planned to transmit on a frequency adjacent to the one used by GPS.

When the [FCC](#) gave LightSquared tentative approval last year to build the network, it said the company wouldn't be allowed to start operations until the government was satisfied that any problems had been addressed.

In Friday's filing, LightSquared said interference wasn't caused by its proposed network, but by GPS manufacturers' failure to properly engineer devices.

"Stated another way, some GPS manufacturers have made poor design choices and have sold defective product," the company said.

GPS manufacturers have insisted that their devices were designed to screen out low-power signals in LightSquared's spectrum, and it wouldn't be fair if the government changed the rules to permit stronger signals after millions of devices had already been sold.

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