

US agency chief seeks to ease airplane electronics ban

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The head of the US agency that regulates telecommunications is calling for an easing of the ban on using mobile phones and other electronic devices on airplanes during takeoff and landing.

[Federal Communications Commission](#) chairman Julius Genachowski says devices such as smartphones "empower people" and can boost economic productivity.

In a letter this week to the Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates the [airline industry](#), Genachowski pushed for a new look at the ban.

"I write to urge the FAA to enable greater use of tablets, e-readers and other portable [electronic devices](#) during flight, consistent with public safety," the FCC chief said in the letter, seen Friday by AFP, to FAA Administrator Michael Huerta.

Genachowski said the FAA has begun a review of these rules, and added that "I support" the initiative.

"The review comes at time of tremendous innovation as [mobile devices](#) are increasingly interwoven in our daily lives," the letter said.

"They empower people to stay informed and connected with friends and family, and they enable both large and small businesses to be more productive and efficient, helping drive economic growth and boost US

competitiveness."

The ban is in place based on the assumption that devices could interfere with an [airplane](#)'s navigation equipment. But a number of news stories have questioned the validity of this claim, and many point out that some people forget to turn off their devices during flights.

The FCC studied the question several years ago but found insufficient evidence to support lifting the ban at the time.

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