



**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**

**Peter A. DeFazio**  
**Chairman**

**Washington, DC 20515**

**Sam Graves, MO**  
**Ranking Member**

**Katherine W. Dedrick, Staff Director**

**March 7, 2019**

**Paul J. Sass, Republican Staff Director**

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao,

Positioning, navigation, and timing signals, currently provided almost exclusively by the Global Positioning System (GPS), are essential for a wide range of American critical infrastructure and transportation services. Yet these signals, while very precise and easy to access, are exceptionally weak and easily disrupted.

The U.S. government since 2001 has recognized this weakness formally. It is the reason President George W. Bush issued in 2004 the U.S. Space-Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Policy (NSPD-39) in part to mandate the Department of Transportation acquire a backup capability for GPS. In furtherance of this policy, in 2008 the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its plans to establish such a capability using enhanced LORAN, or eLORAN, but regrettably, DHS failed to follow through. In 2015, the Obama administration also advised Congress in correspondence that it would establish eLoran as a backup for GPS, but nothing materialized from this commitment.

Not deterred, Congress in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 115-91, section 1606) required the Department of Transportation, in concert with the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, to complete a GPS Backup Technology Demonstration Program by June 2019. Moreover, Congress appropriated \$15M in Fiscal Year 2018 to support this initiative. Of amounts appropriated, \$10 million remained available as of March 2018.

NSPD-39 remains in effect, and consequently, this policy still requires a backup capability for GPS. Unfortunately, we have seen no evidence thus far that the Trump administration has taken any action on this important missing piece of our nation's present and future infrastructure. We also are concerned that 14 months after the mandate to implement a demonstration program became law, and 11 months after Congress provided substantial funds to implement this program, the administration has made little observable progress.

Additionally, the National Timing Resilience and Security Act (Public Law 115-282, section 514) enacted in December, 2018 requires your department to establish a terrestrial timing backup for GPS signals by December 2020. Prior to establishing this backup system, the department is required to develop system requirements and an implementation plan within 180 days after date of enactment and report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The aforementioned GPS Backup Technology Demonstration program should be a key component in the department's ability to fulfil this statutory requirement.

Please advise us on the status of the GPS Backup Technology Demonstration, the general format of the program, the principal responsible official, and a date certain for when your department will complete the program. In addition, we request a status report on your department's activities to meet the requirements of section 514 and report to the Committee within the allotted time.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of and attention to these requests. We would appreciate a reply within two weeks of the date of this letter.

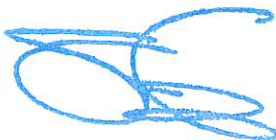
Sincerely,



Peter A. DeFazio  
Chairman



Rick Larsen  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Aviation



Sean Patrick Maloney  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Coast Guard  
and Maritime Transportation



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress