

**Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services**

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May 25, 2017

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, 511  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

We strongly urge you to support the provisions in HR 2518, the 2018, 2019 Coast Guard Authorization Act, requiring the Secretary of Transportation to work through the Coast Guard and establish an eLoran complementary and backup capability for the Global Position System (GPS). We also ask your support for a Department of Transportation appropriation to fund this effort.

A federal service contract for a new eLoran service could cost less than \$50 million a year. It will help protect our nation's transportation systems and other critical infrastructure, along with our \$1B per year investment in GPS. Also, if the contract is structured properly, the government's share of revenue from the contractor's sale of value-added services could well exceed its costs.

GPS signals are essential for every networked technology, including telecommunications, banking/finance, electrical power, and digital broadcast. Yet they are under increasing threat from domestic jamming, solar activity, and accidental interference. Recently, the Director of National Intelligence reported that Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are focusing on improving their already impressive capabilities to jam our satellites. This is the latest in a long series of warnings over four administrations about threats to GPS and our over reliance on the system.

The Department of Transportation has said that GPS is essential for current transportation and for improving systems going forward. The Department of Homeland Security has called GPS "a single point of failure for critical infrastructure." Both departments have announced that a relatively inexpensive, terrestrial, and wireless Enhanced Loran (eLoran) system is the best option to complement and backup GPS.

The Bush and Obama administrations both recognized the danger of America's growing reliance on GPS. Both decided that a complementary and backup system was needed, and

both decided upon eLoran. In 2008, DHS announced that it would build such a system. In 2015, the Deputy Secretaries of Defense and Transportation wrote to Chairman Schuster in the House that they would build it. Yet, despite many low and no-cost-to-the-government options available, nothing has been done.

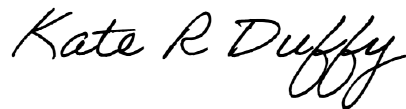
In the face of such prolonged gridlock within the executive branch, Congress must act to protect America.

Standards bodies have long recognized this problem and the government's multiple determinations that eLoran is the best solution. We at RTCM have already published a performance standard for maritime eLoran receivers. SAE is working on an eLoran standard for multi-modal applications, including for critical infrastructure and unmanned vehicles.

A non-profit we support, the Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation, has provided Senate staff drafting assistance for both authorization and appropriation efforts. We support their efforts and would be happy to meet with you or your staff to further discuss these issues.

Thank you for your help on this important national issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate R Duffy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" at the end.

Kate R. Duffy  
RTCM President