

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on "Where Are We?: Examining Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Capabilities in the United States"

June 4, 2026

Today, we are discussing our nation's positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) technology and capabilities. While most Americans have not heard of PNT, they are likely familiar with our primary source of PNT data and information – the Global Positioning System or GPS. And whether you know it or not, GPS is everywhere. From the Starbucks app knowing where you are to our power grid staying online and on time, GPS powers it all.

It is not an exaggeration to say that GPS literally helps keep the lights on. But GPS also has made it easier to track someone without them knowing, which raises real privacy concerns. So, we must ensure that going forward, consumer privacy is considered in any future PNT advancements.

GPS was first created by the military in the 1970s and then extended to civilians and commercial use in the 1980s. Importantly, GPS has remained a free public benefit since that time and now serves billions of users around the world. Because of this, it is not surprising that we all have GPS embedded into many of our everyday devices, including navigating our cars or ourselves from one location to another. But GPS is also crucial for ensuring our planes, trains, and trucks arrive safely and on time, it aids in weather monitoring, provides life-saving information to first responders, and supports our national defense systems.

So, it is critical that we understand how GPS is faring and what mechanisms are in place to complement GPS in the event of an outage or attack. As we know, resilient communications networks can be the difference between life and death when the unexpected strikes. And the reality is that GPS has vulnerabilities. Unfortunately, due to technical constraints, GPS has challenges providing precise location data indoors or underground.

But more concerning is that we have seen our foreign adversaries, including Russia and China, increasingly interfering with GPS by jamming and spoofing the signal. When jamming occurs, the GPS signal is unable to be used because it is blocked entirely. Even more malicious, with spoofing, fake GPS signals send incorrect location and timing information to devices leading one to believe they are somewhere they are not. In either case, the consequences are significant and put our national security at risk. In fact, any outage or threat to GPS could result in significant threats to public safety, economic loss, transportation service disruptions, and property and environmental damage.

It is critical that we understand how to both enhance the durability of GPS and ensure there are viable alternatives to it. Building resilient and redundant communications networks is always the smart thing to do, especially given the stakes at play.

It also makes sense for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and other federal agencies to continue to evaluate potential backup technology to GPS. These initiatives, are needed as we must have a broad selection of GPS alternatives in this country – whether they operate on the ground or in space. Because one solution will not work in every geographic terrain or environment.

That said, the FCC's review of any proposals that could complement GPS must be thorough, technically sound, and in the public's interest. Given the numerous consumer benefits of GPS, any alternative PNT solutions must also put American consumers first. Therefore, I fully expect the FCC to abide by the requirements of the Communications Act and undertake a rigorous technical review of any PNT proposals it receives and ensure that they operate with the public's interest in mind. This way consumers can be assured that they are protected and not burdened by unexpected costs and unnecessary upgrades.

Finally, while securing GPS – and any alternatives to it – is critical, I continue to strongly believe that these network solutions must be designed with robust consumer privacy protections in mind. Americans should not have to sacrifice their privacy for their security.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.