

Questionable contact over LightSquared

Written by Grassley Press

Monday, 23 January 2012 14:15

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Grassley Pursues Details of Questionable Contact Related to LightSquared

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa today asked the principal behind the LightSquared wireless project to explain a questionable contact to Grassley’s office that intimated benefits for Grassley if he softened his inquiry of government approval of the project.

Grassley wrote to Philip Falcone of Harbinger Capital Partners, expressing concern that two separate incidents implied a desire to have Grassley “pull punches” in his investigation. Grassley said he “won’t be a part of that.” One contact came in an email from Falcone to Grassley’s office, saying that since LightSquared is already in the political “arena,” it could be made a “win” for Grassley, LightSquared, and the consumer.

The second contact was from someone who intimated that he represented LightSquared in a call to Grassley’s staff. The individual, Todd Ruelle, said he “only gets paid if this deal goes through” and hinted that if LightSquared were allowed to proceed, Grassley’s home state of Iowa could get a “call center.” Grassley’s office advised Ruelle not to contact the office further and called the Senate ethics committee regarding the contact.

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Ruelle also was named in emails made public through a separate inquiry. In the emails, Ruelle corresponded with Fox News Channel bookers over making arrangements for a Falcone appearance. After Ruelle forwarded these e-mails to a government official, the government official asked Ruelle to cease communicating with him.

Grassley wrote to Falcone, asking him to explain whether he and/or LightSquared have a relationship with Ruelle and if so, to provide details.

Since last April, Grassley has been reviewing why the Federal Communications Commission rushed approval of the LightSquared project without adequately exploring what turned out to be widespread concerns of interference with the Global Positioning System devices widely used by the military, first responders, aviation, precision agriculture, and consumer navigation.

The text of Grassley's letter to Falcone is available [here](#) . The attachments are available [here](#)
,
[here](#)
and
[here](#)
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