

FCC refuses access to staff on LightSquared, despite offer

Written by Grassley Press
Monday, 19 March 2012 10:55

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Wednesday, March 7, 2012

In January, staff for Sen. Chuck Grassley on separate occasions asked the Federal Communications Commission chairman to make two senior staff members available to discuss the LightSquared wireless project. The first staff member was Paul de Sa, who was described as the “father” of the LightSquared project, before he left the agency. When Grassley staff asked to meet with de Sa, the FCC’s legislative affairs director responded that he was “not available.” The second staff member was Joshua Gottheimer, who, according to media reports and FCC materials, has been named the FCC chairman’s senior counselor with a special responsibility toward implementing President Obama’s National Broadband Plan. The broadband plan recommended a particular spectrum band that primarily would have benefited LightSquared. Gottheimer previously worked for a public relations firm that serves LightSquared. When Grassley sent his Jan. 30 letter requesting a meeting with his staff and Gottheimer, the FCC asked his office to keep the letter confidential while the agency decided how it would respond to the request. Grassley’s staff waited one month and did not hear from the agency. Grassley’s staff called the FCC, and the FCC refused to provide access to Gottheimer.

Grassley made the following comment on the FCC’s refusal to make senior staff available to discuss LightSquared.

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“The FCC chairman wrote to me last October that he would ‘continue to make staff available to discuss this matter further’ with me or my staff at our ‘convenience.’ That turned out to be an empty offer. The FCC has refused to allow access to two staff members who likely would be able to shed some light on the FCC’s questionable decision to give the green light to the LightSquared project. It’s unfortunate that this agency operates as a closed shop when the public’s business ought to be public. It adds insult to injury to promise openness and fail to fulfill the offer. The good news is a key House committee is trying to shed light on the FCC’s thinking on LightSquared. Some transparency might be required of the agency after all.”

The text of Grassley’s letters to Genachowksi requesting access to staff members is available

[here](#)

and

[here](#)

. The chairman's letter from last October offering to make staff available is available

[here](#)

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