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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President

For Immediate Release March 30, 1998

VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES
ENHANCEMENTS TO THE GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM
THAT WILL BENEFIT CIVILIAN USERS WORLDWIDE

Washington DC -- Vice President Gore today announced that a second civilian signal will be provided by the U.S. Global Positioning System.

"This new civilian signal will mean significant improvements in navigation, positioning and timing services to millions of users worldwide -- from backpackers and fishermen to farmers, airline pilots, and scientists," the Vice President said.

The addition of a second civil signal represents a strong commitment by the United States to civil GPS users worldwide and is a major step in the evolution of GPS as a global information utility. Much like the Internet, GPS is becoming increasingly indispensable for navigation, positioning, and timing by users around the world. Also like the Internet, GPS has become an engine of economic growth and efficiency as businesses and consumers continue to develop new and creative applications of this technology.

The addition of a second frequency will greatly enhance the accuracy, reliability and robustness of civilian GPS receivers by enabling them to make more effective corrections for the distorting effects of the Earth's atmosphere on the signals from space. GPS has always provided signals on two frequencies for military users for this purpose. Today's announcement marks a new era in which civilians will have access to the same type of capability.

"The decision announced today demonstrates that we can successfully balance the needs of civilian users with the demands of national security," Vice President Gore said. "GPS civil signals are, and will continue to be, provided free of charge to consumers, businesses, and scientists around the world. We will continue to do everything we can to protect these GPS signals and to promote GPS applications for commercial, public safety, and national security purposes."

The addition of a second civil signal has been recommended by a number of expert panels, the most recent of which was the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security,

chaired by the Vice President. Today's announcement fulfills a pledge made last March by the Departments of Defense and Transportation to reach a decision on a second civil frequency within a year. The Departments of Defense and Transportation co-chair an Interagency GPS Executive Board, created by President Clinton in 1996 to manage GPS and its U.S. government augmentations.

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The NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS) is a constellation of 24 satellites developed, launched, and maintained by the U.S. Air Force that provides positioning, timing, and navigation signals free-of-charge to both military and civilian users worldwide.

A second civil frequency will allow receivers to measure the time of arrival for two signals that have passed through the Earth's atmosphere and correct for the distortion introduced by passage from space to earth.

An improved location calculation will allow safety-critical users requiring dynamic, reliable capability to be more reliant on the GPS signal, improve the overall accuracy of the system for the average user, and allow the high-accuracy users (surveying, geodesy, weather forecasters, etc.) to determine their data in a faster, more reliable manner. In addition, the second civil signal will allow the safety-critical users to have a backup signal in the event of inadvertent disruption of the current civil signal.

The Interagency GPS Executive Board (IGEB) has selected the 1227.6 MHz band (currently known as the L2 signal) for the addition of new civil capability. A third civil signal will also be added with a decision on the frequency to be made in August of this year. The decision on which of these two new signals the Government will pursue to become the safety-of-life service signal will also be made in August.

One of the key factors in deciding which frequency to pursue as the safety-of-life signal is a commitment by all members of the IGEB to have a safety-of-life service signal available by 2005.

The new signals are intended to be added to the GPS Block IIF satellites.

The new signals will be available to all civil users worldwide. Internationally, interest has been expressed via the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in the use of a second GPS civil signal in conjunction with the Japanese MSAS and the European EGNOS augmentation

programs.

Currently the GPS system is used by a wide range of users: from cars and trucks on the nation's highways to ships at sea and on inland waterways; from civil aviation to satellites in space, from earthquake monitoring equipment to surveyors to backpackers; new industries such as precision farming; and the electrical power companies and long-distance phone systems which derive timing and synchronization from the signals.