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Infrastructure News Trucking Regulation

Trump demands protection for GPS-based transportation

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 Order would establish "PNT profiles" within the transportation sector. Credit: Jim Allen/FreightWaves.



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President Donald Trump issued an executive order Wednesday aimed at protecting and promoting GPS for positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) services used in transportation systems.

“Because of the widespread adoption of PNT services, the disruption or manipulation of these services has the potential to adversely affect the national and economic security of the United States,” [the order](#) states. “To strengthen national resilience, the Federal Government must foster the responsible use of PNT services by critical infrastructure owners and operators.”

The order requires that within 180 days the Secretary of Transportation, along with other cabinet agency heads, is to develop a pilot program to evaluate the responsible use of PNT services with infrastructure owners and operators. The pilot is to be completed within one year of creating an initial plan, with results used to develop a “PNT profile” and to inform opportunities for research and development.

“PNT services, such as [GPS], are critical to the safe and efficient use of the national transportation system by the traveling public, the freight community, other commercial and private entities,” the U.S. Department of Transportation said in a statement.

“The Department is committed to working with industry, as well as the other departments and agencies, to ensure expeditious implementation of the framework and resulting transportation PNT profiles. Our challenge is to enable increased resilience across our transportation systems and ensure the traveling public and freight transporters experience an increased level of safety and efficiency without the possibility of interference caused by loss or manipulation of PNT.”

Because trucking is relying increasingly on GPS to improve efficiency and reduce costs, the new policy is likely to draw the attention of technology developers.

“GPS data allows companies to watch the trucks move around the grid in real time and understand data at a more granular level than just counting the

number of miles a truck drives,” Dale Willis, vice president of data services and insurance at startup Netradyne, [told FreightWaves last year](#). “Data can help companies identify where fleets are being driven, when they’re being driven and how they’re being driven.”

Disruptions in the Mediterranean Sea last year caused by GPS “spoofing” of cargo vessels resulted in lost GPS signals affecting bridge navigation, GPS-based timing and communications equipment, prompting the U.S. Maritime Administration to issue [updated guidance](#) that is still in effect.

A study commissioned by the U.S. Commerce Department’s National Institute of Standards and Technology found that GPS-based PNT services have led to over \$1.4 trillion in U.S. economic benefits since GPS became available in the 1980s, according to the agency. It pointed out that the same study estimates a hypothetical disruption to GPS could result in \$30 billion-\$45 billion in economic losses over a 30-day period.

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3 Comments
