Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors
An Association of Photogrammetry, Mapping, and Geospatial Firms ®

January 26, 2012

Mr. Scott Walker
Governor, State of Wisconsin
115 East State Capitol
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Walker,

With almost every state facing a budget deficit and all looking for ways to economize, I am writing to respectfully urge you to conduct a review of Wisconsin's activities in the geospatial field.

As you may know, the geospatial community has been identified by the U.S. Department of Labor as one of the fastest growing workforces in the United States. The geospatial profession is a practice that uses geographic information as a base, but layers, integrates and includes other data to provide faster, more efficient and accurate solutions to a plethora of issues. In today's electronic world, geospatial applications offer a visual perspective to clients, users and consumers that was only previously available to a limited market, particularly engineers and the military. Geographic information systems (GIS), with their meaningful and easy to read formats, have become common in everyday life in government, the commercial sector, and consumer. This provides decision makers more complete information that helps them make crucial decisions - such as where tax revenues are generated, the condition of the infrastructure, and how and where to spend, maintain or conserve resources - faster and more accurately. Geospatial information plays a crucial role in every sector of today's society. Recent studies estimate that up to 90% of government information has a geospatial information component and as much as 80% of the information managed by business is connected to a specific location.

In order to harness the power of geospatial information in Wisconsin, we respectfully recommend the following:

289. Conduct a review of each state agency to determine whether geospatial activities are conducted with state employees that could and should be contracted to the private sector, with particular attention to the state's department of transportation.

Many state agencies operate in-house mapping and geospatial activities that are performed by state employees, despite a qualified, competent and efficient private sector, including small business. Agencies involved in transportation and infrastructure, natural resources, emergency management and homeland security, environmental protection, forestry and agriculture, and economic development duplicate, and in some cases, compete with private geospatial firms.

Ever since the original Highway Act was enacted at the urging of President Eisenhower in 1956, federal law has required the Secretary of Transportation to **"**wherever practicable, authorize the use of photogrammetric methods in mapping, and the utilization of commercial enterprise for such services". The law was amended in the 1995 National Highway System Act to require the Secretary to "issue guidance to encourage States to utilize, to the maximum extent practicable, private sector sources for surveying and mapping services for projects" (23 U.S.C. 306).

Despite more than 50 years of law, the opposite of the intent of Congress has been realized – states operate in-house mapping-related functions.

Historically, many state departments of transportation (DoT's) have used Federal highway money, as well as their own transportation funds, to build in-house capabilities in surveying, mapping, engineering and planning. Numerous states have their own crews, equipment and capabilities that duplicate services available from private firms. Many states have airplanes and cameras for mapping aerial photography, analytical stereoplotters and softcopy photogrammetric workstations, GPS surveying receivers, photographic laboratories and other expensive equipment to perform services already available, from private firms. Most recently, states have made, or are planning, expensive investments ($1M+) in digital aerial cameras, airborne LiDAR sensors, and mobile mapping systems that duplicate private investment. Some state DOT's even market these services outside their own agency, performing work for other state agencies, city and county government, even non-government organizations, in direct competition with the private sector.

Given the unitization rates of State DoT equipment, particular aircraft and aerial cameras/sensors, there is no conceivable way that government ownership and operation of this equipment is financially/fiscally/economically justified.

Similarly, many state agencies engage in hydrographic surveying of its lakes, rivers, harbors and coastal areas that duplicate and compete with the private sector. There are numerous private firms that work as contractors to federal agencies such as the Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) performing high quality, timely and accurate hydrographic surveys for nautical charting, navigation, coastal zone management and other important applications. In fact, contracting out of NOAA's hydrographic surveying services was a key component of the "Reinventing Government" and "National Performance Review" of the Clinton-Gore administration in the 1990s, resulting in a program that has lowered costs, increased productivity, and reduced the nation's survey backlog.

290. Create a current, accurate GIS-based inventory of all state owned land so determinations can be made which land is surplus and can be disposed for tax-generating activities in private ownership.

Like the Federal government, many states do not have a current, accurate inventory of the land it owns. Whether finding ways to consolidate workspaces, putting land to better use, or uncovering excessive and unnecessary maintenance costs, real property inventories are an important tool which state policy makers can use to make good management decisions.

A well managed, regularly updated GIS-based inventory can also help save the state money by identifying properties that can be sold, collecting up-front cash and expanding the tax base by letting the private sector develop and use the land and assets that the state no longer needs.

291. Establish a state GIS Coordination Council, with private sector participation and representation.

States need to establish strong GIS coordination efforts to minimize costs and ensure that activities and opportunities are leveraged to benefit all levels of government. Significant cost savings can be realized through coordinated efforts using the "Map It Once and Use It Many Times" approach. Additionally, when the federal government places demands on state and local governments, assets may be misdirected or inefficiently utilized if there is not a strong statewide coordination effort. Frequently, government collects data, or builds data collection capabilities, that are already available from the private sector, thus resulting in a waste of tax dollars, costly duplication, and unfair government competition with private enterprise. To better support interaction and coordination between all levels of government, effective statewide coordination of GIS, a state coordination council is recommended. In order to avoid costly duplication, and to assure that the geospatial community, which represents one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy, is part of strategies and decision making that will result in the creation of private sector jobs, it is imperative that the private sector have full and proportional representation on such councils.

292. End state prison industry performance of mapping and GIS services.

In many states, prison industries are established to reduce idleness and teach job skills to inmates. While these are laudable goals, prisoners should not be provided access to personal or sensitive information about individual citizens or their property. The Federal government has prohibited the Federal Prison Industries program from being engaged in any activity that would provide prisoners access to classified or sensitive data, geographic information systems (GIS) data regarding the location of surface or subsurface infrastructure for water, electrical or communications or gas, bulk petroleum or other products, commodities or utilities, or personal information about individual private citizens' real property. A similar citizen protection and prisoner prohibition should be implemented in a state prison industry program.

293. Audit practices of state universities to assure they are not conducting mapping and geospatial services for hire with state and local agencies or other entities in unfair competition with the private sector

State universities often perform commercially-available geospatial and GIS services and state agencies contract with universities for commercial activities in the geospatial and GIS field, usually on a fee-based reimbursement basis. These universities use students, state tax dollars and state facilities to perform work that should be performed by private sector firms. These institutions are engaged in activities that go far beyond any reasonable education and research mission. They market their services, exhibit at trade shows, submit competitive proposals on procurements and receive grants and contracts, often on a sole source basis. Policies should be implemented and enforced to assure that university activities that duplicate and compete with the private sector, and thus take work opportunities away from the private sector, are eliminated.

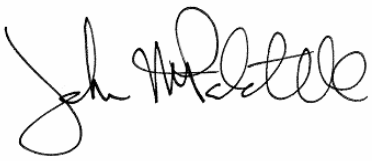
294. Conduct an assessment of state utilization of geospatial technologies to determine whether the most cost-effective and state-of-the art services and solutions are being provided to your citizens

Budgets are getting tighter, but citizen expectations are still high for the services government provide. Location Based Services (LBS) is enabling efficiency and accountability for government agencies. GPS and GIS-based dispatch and fleet management technology saves lives by improving response times for public safety organizations. Activities from snow removal, street cleaning and maintenance, trash pick-up, service calls by water and sewer providers, school bus routing and identification of impervious surfaces for water pollution control under the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), permitting and compliance are just some of the services enhanced by GIS and GPS technology. These technologies enable state and local government service providers to do more with less. By assessing the state's utilization of geospatial LBS and implementing improvements that fully embrace this technology, savings can be achieved and service-delivery can be improved.

Conclusion

MAPPS would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your administration on the development and implementation of policies and programs to achieve these goals. Strategic use of private sector GIS and geospatial capabilities can help create jobs; reduce waste, inefficiency, and duplication in state government programs; and enhance the efficiency of government services. We stand ready to assist you in these endeavors. Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact John Byrd, MAPPS Government Affairs manager, jbyrd@mapps.org or (703) 787-6996.

Respectfully,



John Palatiello
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