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June 22, 2010

Senator Herbert Kohl
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council (WIGICC), we urge you to support funding for the U.S. Geological Survey's National Geospatial Program. In addition to serving as County Board Chair in Eau Claire County, I am also Chair of WIGICC. WIGICC is a 17-member council that works to improve the quality, accessibility, utility and value of geographic information and technologies. Members are representatives of the following nine sectors: municipalities, counties, regional planning organizations, state agencies, federal government, tribal government, private sector, non-profit sector, and higher education. The Wisconsin Geographic Information Officer and the Wisconsin State Cartographer serve as ex-officio members.

The proposed USGS budget for FY 2011 is \$1,133 million, an increase of \$21.6 million over FY 2010. However, for the National Geospatial Program (NGP) the proposed budget is \$65.9 million, a reduction of \$3.5 million over FY 2010. The proposed reduction would eliminate USGS Partnership funds, which are used to leverage local and state efforts to acquire new geospatial data. In addition, state liaison positions would be impacted.

Additional budget and program details can be found in the "Greenbook" at http://www.usgs.gov/budget/2011/greenbook/FY2011_USGS_Greenbook.pdf

As noted in the Greenbook, the NGP is a highly successful program. The benefit-to-cost ratio for the USGS is as high as 15:1 for data acquisition activities under the program. The cuts would result in an annual loss of as much as \$20 million worth of geospatial data, and would undermine the fundamental strategy of maintaining the nation's geospatial data framework. While cost savings are important and understandable in these times, the proposed reduction of \$3.5 million is only a fraction (0.3%) of an overall budget of \$1,133 million, which is itself nearly 2% higher than in FY 2010.

In Wisconsin, NGP funding has been critical to a number of significant data acquisition efforts and geospatial initiatives.

- The 2010 statewide WROC orthophoto project benefited from \$225,000 of direct NGP Partnership funding. In addition, through the coordination efforts of Dick Vraga, the USGS Liaison for Wisconsin, an additional \$180,000 was leveraged from other federal agencies. In short, the statewide orthophoto project would not have gotten off the ground without the NGP. This is an example of a coordinated effort in which NGP funds have benefited local, state, and national partners. Please see the enclosed letter from the Wisconsin Regional Orthophotography Consortium requesting that funds be restored to the USGS budget.
- Partnership grants have recently been awarded to the Wisconsin Geographic Information Office and Department of Natural Resources for work on statewide boundary and hydrographic data. These grants, totaling approximately \$90,000, have helped support geospatial activities at a time when state resources are scarce. Without the Partnership grants and the efforts of the State Liaison to obtain this funding, these important statewide efforts would not have been possible.
- A partnership grant of \$38,000 was awarded in 2008 to help create WIGICC (the Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council). In this case NGP funds are helping Wisconsin reach parity with other states in terms of geospatial coordination efforts, in order to participate effectively at a national level through NSGIC (National States Geographic Information Council) and other organizations.
- The NGP has contributed toward many other projects in the state, including LiDAR projects in Dodge, Lincoln, Bayfield and (anticipated) Washington counties, and the 2008 NAIP project.

USGS funding benefits Wisconsin citizens greatly. We appreciate anything you can do to ensure adequate funding for the National Geospatial Program. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

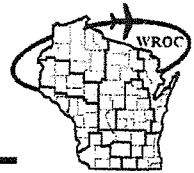


Gregg Moore
WIGICC Chair

Enclosure

c: Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council Members

WISCONSIN REGIONAL ORTHOPHOTOGRAPHY CONSORTIUM



Gregg Moore

Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council –WIGICC Chair
Eau Claire County Board – Chair
428 E. Tyler Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54701

RE: Restoring Funds to U.S. Geological Survey Budget

May 19, 2010

Dear Mr. Moore:

Please accept this letter of concern on behalf of the Wisconsin Regional Orthophotography Consortium (WROC). We have recently become aware of proposed cuts in a federal program that has served our state extremely well. As members of WROC, we are asking for your help in the restoration of this funding.

Specifically we are asking for the restitution of the \$3.5 million cut in the **President's FY 2011 Budget for the National Geospatial Program at the U.S. Geological Survey**. Pages 1-29 of this document calls for major cuts to the National Map Partnership which will have a negative impact on Wisconsin's future orthoimagery projects.

The USGS liaisons have provided one of the best conduits for partnerships between the states and the federal government. Richard Vraga, the USGS liaison for the state of Wisconsin, has been very helpful in moving these partnerships forward and has provided coordination assistance in locating funds for our member Counties. Through Mr. Vraga's efforts, data partnerships have reduced costs and duplication of efforts statewide. He has been a major contributor in making our WROC program a success.

We urge you to contact the legislators on our behalf to lobby against this decrease in funding as it will only have negative impacts for orthoimagery acquisition in the future. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Andrew Faust, GISP
GIS Analyst,
NCWRPC

Kirk Contrucci, CP
Vice President,
Ayres & Associates

Joshua Schedler
GIS Coordinator,
BLRPC

Michael Zuege
GIS Specialist
ECWRPC