



August 4, 2009

Ms. Karen Siderelis, Acting Chair
Federal Geographic Data Committee
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Siderelis:

As you may recall, as early as January 2006, MAPPS communicated to the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) its support for the concept of Imagery for the Nation (IFTN). We continue to believe that if properly implemented, the IFTN proposal would have tremendous potential benefit for the American people, to facilitate coordination, enhance partnerships, provide economy and efficiency and build a critical layer of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI).

In January 2006, MAPPS outlined several issues that needed to be resolved in order for IFTN to be a reality. At its June 3-4, 2008 meeting, the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) endorsed "the concept of Imagery for the Nation". The resolution adopted by NGAC added, "however, before it (IFTN) is authorized and implemented, the following issues need to be resolved ..." The issues identified by the NGAC in 2008 closely paralleled those identified by MAPPS in 2006. Many of those issues remain unresolved today.

The MAPPS Board of Directors revisited this matter on June 25, 2009 during our recent annual meeting.

In recent weeks, MAPPS has worked closely with several other organizations on the development of a resolution supporting the concept of Imagery for the Nation. The resolutions under consideration also called for the FGDC to resolve the outstanding issues in the proposed IFTN program.

Unfortunately, for procedural reasons, MAPPS was not able to render a decision on a resolution recently endorsed by several other geospatial organizations. As you know, among those organizations, only MAPPS was invited to testify before Congress on July 23. The final deliberations among these organizations fell literally within hours of the Congressional hearing and due to our preparation for that hearing, a MAPPS vote was impossible. MAPPS certainly supports the spirit of the resolution adopted by the other organizations.

John M. Palatiello, Executive Director
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We wish to reiterate, as we first did in January of 2006 and as NGAC did in June of 2008, that there are important implementation issues in IFTN that must be resolved. These include (1) assuring that contracts for IFTN data acquisition and ortho processing services be awarded via a qualifications based selection process, (2) assuring that such commercial services are performed by contract by the private sector and that IFTN funds are not used by government agencies to acquire or operate equipment to perform data acquisition and ortho processing services in a manner that results in government duplication of or unfair competition with the private sector, and (3) that a strategy for small business participation be developed.

MAPPS once again expresses its desire to be involved in the development of solutions to these issues. We believe a collaborative public-private partnership to resolve these important issues is not only consistent with the spirit of the partnership IFTN seeks, but will result in a strong and mutually supportable outcome that will contribute to making IFTN a reality.

We look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Lovin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Lovin, CP, PS
MAPPS President