



July 26, 2006

Ms. Jennifer McNelly
Director, Business Relations Group
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room N-4643
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Ms. McNelly:

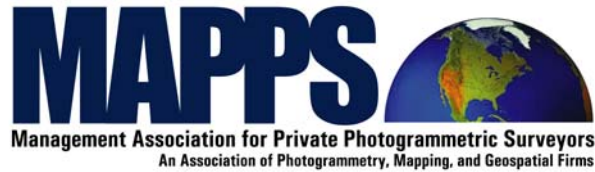
Thank you once again for inviting MAPPSS to meet on June 19 to discuss the terminology being utilized by the Department of Labor in its implementation of the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative in the geospatial community.

First, let me reiterate the deep appreciation of the MAPPSS membership that President Bush, Secretary Chao and the Labor Department have identified the geospatial community for the High Growth Job Training Initiative. Our member firms are experiencing an acute challenge in recruiting qualified employment candidates. The President's initiative will go a long way toward resolving this shortage in the long term and we are grateful for the initiative.

Second, I wish to point out once again that the material MAPPSS presented on June 19 was fact, not opinion. We did not proffer a suggestion; we demonstrated significant precedent in court and administrative cases, Federal regulations, Federal and State laws, and other evidence that the use of wording such as "industry", "information technology", and "apprenticeships" have significant negative procurement policy, university accreditation, academic curricula, and tax policy implications on geospatial professionals.

It was our belief that a consensus was reached by the conclusion of our June 19 meeting. The main points agreed to on June 19 were memorialized in your emails to all the participants on June 26 and July 6. We are concerned, however, that this consensus may now be in jeopardy with the recent letter and listserve announcements that GITA has undertaken since June 19 that misrepresents what was discussed at the meeting and the conclusions that were drawn. We certainly hope this is not the case and hope that GITA hereafter refrains from pursuing an advocacy agenda while attempting to impartially administer a Department of Labor grant – an obvious potential conflict of interest.

It is important to reaffirm what MAPPSS presented on June 19. First, we did **NOT** advocate that geospatial be restricted to architects and engineers. In fact, one of MAPPSS handouts on June 19 was a paper by Dr. Harlan Onsrud of the University of



Maine that detailed the use of geospatial services, data, and technology across a broad, cross-cutting swath of the economy, including information technology, finance, earth science, homeland security and public safety, health care and many other disciplines and applications.

We also pointed out that **CHANGING** the classification of “geospatial” as it is currently designated in NAICS (among other government categorizations) would have profound and harmful affects on thousands of workers in hundreds of private firms, as well as government employees and college professors, particularly if it were to be classified as part of the information technology industry. While we did not discuss a specific new title for the geospatial community on June 19, and your suggestion that it be designated as “**Geographic Information Sciences & Technology**” was a new idea first introduced in your email of July 6, it is a title that MAPPS strongly prefers to the terms “information technology” and “industry”, we would recommend the word “geospatial” rather than “geographic”.

We believe there is a broad and growing geospatial market in the United States (and around the world). At the **core** are professionals who produce precise and accurate geospatial data for many of the users that GITA and other associations serve. Many of these professionals are licensed by the several states. Others are certified by organizations such as ASPRS. A number of organizations have Codes of Ethics to guide their practice. Standards are promulgated by government agencies and private organizations. Individuals in this field are indeed “professionals” who are held to a higher standard of practice than workers in an “industry”.

While we prefer “Geospatial Profession” to describe these practitioners we absolutely recognize that the Geospatial “Community” includes users (government, utility companies, etc.), software and hardware manufacturers, software developers, systems integrators, and discipline specific service providers. As we discussed on June 19, it is important that these users be distinguished from geospatial data production professionals. While the users and members of the broader “community” are part of the market, they are not subject to the standards, codes or laws noted above that apply to data producers. We truly believe that our “language” concerns would have no effect on the user community.

Finally, we welcome the opportunity to work with all the pertinent agencies of the Department of Labor to develop new terminology to replace “apprenticeship” as the description of the training, experience and education delivery system for entry into technician or professional level occupations in the geospatial field.

Over the last week, there has been inaccurate and vitriolic discourse by other organizations on this important issue. We are also concerned that the line between an objective, unbiased and dispassionate grant manager and an advocacy organization with an agenda that it is trying to impose via its grant has been blurred, if not crossed. We respectfully urge the Department of Labor to investigate that matter and take appropriate corrective action.



We look forward to working with you on a High Growth Job Training Initiative for the geospatial community that will help, not injure, firms in the profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kurt Allen'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kurt Allen, PLS
MAPPS President