

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2021 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we ask that you provide robust funding for the 3DEP Elevation Program, or 3DEP, administered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

3DEP will satisfy the growing demand for consistent, high-quality topographic data and a wide range of other three-dimensional representations of the Nation's natural and constructed features. The USGS has identified more than 600 applications that would benefit from enhanced elevation data. Data procured from 3DEP can be applied to flood risk management; infrastructure; water resources; aviation safety; telecommunications; homeland security; emergency response; precision agriculture; energy; pipeline safety; and other areas. 3DEP will promote economic growth, facilitate resource development and management while enhancing environmental protection, assist with infrastructure improvement, and generally enhance the quality of life of all Americans. In addition, lidar data from 3DEP helps provide the USGS Natural Hazards Program with the best available scientific information and tools to reduce the threat of injuries, fatalities, and economic loss from a variety of disasters caused by the natural hazards such as landslides, sinkholes, earthquakes and volcanoes.

The USGS, with involvement from the private sector and other stakeholders, conducted a National Enhanced Elevation Assessment (NEEA), to determine and document the need for national elevation data within government and private markets. The results indicated that enhanced elevation data could have the potential to generate \$13 billion in annual benefits, at a benefits-to-cost ratio of 4.7 to 1. The USGS has previously recommended that \$146 million will enable USGS to achieve nationwide coverage of the United States on an 8-year cycle, as originally conceived in the USGS plan for 3DEP.

We urge you to provide robust funding for the 3D Elevation Program. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Cory Gardner
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Martha McSally
United States Senator