

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 24, 2021

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We write to respectfully request that you provide robust funding for the 3D Elevation Program, or 3DEP, administered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and codified by Public Law 116-223, in the FY 2022 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

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 are committed to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do everything we can to maximize the benefits for our constituents and for citizens across the country from the more than 600 public applications and business uses of enhanced elevation data. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator