

Jon Giles, PLS, GISP
137 West Gray Rd.
Gray, Maine 04039
207.671.4196
jon.giles.mapper@gmail.com

Dear Senator Nangle and Representative Stover,

Please support LD1687 to Provide Funding to Support Digital Mapping Critical to all of Maine and to support the Maine Library of Geographic Information and its Board!

As a licensed Maine land surveyor and digital mapping professional, I have had the pleasure and honor to have served as the former Board Chair of the Maine Library of Geographic Information (the Maine GeoLibrary). In my career have worked in and for both the private and public sectors for almost 30 years across the entire State of Maine. Modern digital mapping data underpins all of Maine's economy, culture, citizens, and towns. It applies to all 16 counties and often saves society precious money, time, and resources. Up to date digital mapping data can make or break our fellow Mainers' activities and pursuits in life. Whether they want to build their first home, promote economic development in their local town, help the local land trust organization, seek to improve water quality, go hunting, replace their septic system, manage their family woodlot, or make sure the emergency services can find their house in a medical emergency. Digital mapping data is needed for a of these situations and it needs to be up to date.

This sort of Maine specific mapping data cannot exist without investments by the State of Maine for the residents, businesses, and organizations of the State of Maine. The Maine GeoLibrary Board and its mission was created over 20 years ago to ensure Maine had the data to support Maine's future. 20 years ago this data was essential to help Maine compete with other states all making similar investments.

Funding like what LD1887 requests is essential to fuel the updating and creation of up to date Maine focused mapping data. The GeoLibrary Board provides guidance for acquisition and hosting of geographic data of critical importance to all state agencies and communities in the State of Maine. When the GeoLibrary was formed nearly 20 years ago digital mapping was in its infancy. It has since evolved into a mature technology requiring extensive digital data for accurate and informative mapping. This mapping is made available to all of Maine to increase the return on investment (ROI) to everyone, everywhere in the State of Maine. Past ROI studies have documented the ROI can be anywhere from 4 to over 10 times the original cost of the data, as Maine citizens and businesses reduce costs, risks, and a lack of actionable information. Because of the economies of scale involved and the reusability of the data, Mainers can benefit from multiple uses of the data and offset otherwise individualized and expensive data collection efforts of their own.

In the early days, the Board's work emphasized converting existing paper maps to digital computer records. Today the emphasis is on improving the quality and accuracy of data required for maintaining maps crucial to the decision making at all levels of Maine governmental jurisdictions as well as that of the general public. This data is used throughout state agencies and impacts all of Maine's communities, even if they themselves do not have their own mapping program.

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As a profession mapper and land surveyor, I have witnessed the importance of the GeoLibrary services and data. The aerial imagery acquisition program (orthoimagery) and elevation mapping (from light detection and ranging data or LIDAR data), has saved my private landowner clients and municipal mapping clients hundreds of thousands of dollars year after year. This has led to much more accurate and higher quality results for everyone I have worked for over the years.

The Board cannot continue to provide this and other services without increased support from the State. The contract for orthoimagery acquisition services has lapsed due to lack of staff capacity to complete a new RFP. I am extremely grateful to the DAF's Commissioner and Governor for recognizing the deficiencies and importance of this work to the state. Including support in the State's budget for the GeoLibrary is overdue and very much needed!

Again, please support this very consequential program for my community and the State! Support LD1687

Respectfully,

