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Testimony of Leticia vanVuuren in support of
LD 1687 an Act to Improve Geographic Information System Data Acquisition and Maintenance
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Leticia vanVuuren, and I am the Geospatial Database Manager for Knox County Emergency Management Agency and the Chair of the Maine GeoLibrary Board. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 1687, an Act to Improve Geographic Information System Data Acquisition and Maintenance.

Established through state legislative statute now over 20 years ago, the Maine GeoLibrary (also known as the Maine Library of Geographic Information Systems) is responsible for maintaining necessary state-wide base map layers and is THE “one-stop-shop” for all state and federal authoritative datasets. GeoLibrary coordinated datasets are increasingly integral to a number of state, county, municipal, business, non-profit, academic, and public functions. They feed, for example, into municipal planning and assessing, state infrastructure maintenance and modernization, and community resilience efforts. Within the emergency management cycle, I would like to highlight that the GeoLibrary datasets support hazard vulnerability and risk assessments for county hazard mitigation plans, which are required by coded federal regulations. My agency will begin work on the assessments for our hazard mitigation plan update later this year.

As both Chair of the GeoLibrary Board and an end user, I respectfully request that the Committee support the GeoLibrary as outlined in LD-1687, through two State of Maine positions and matching funds for mapping acquisition and processing projects. Maintaining the datasets, performing community outreach, developing funding partners, managing the GeoLibrary capacity has become a full-time effort, which should be performed by a state employee, but is currently only staffed by a part-time consultant. The GeoLibrary has grown and proven their ability to secure matching funds for mapping acquisitions, currently bringing to the state a value of over \$3M. The requested funding and staff will ensure that all Mainers, especially those most impacted by the digital divide, can fully realize all the civic, economic, health, educational, social and other benefits these resources provide.

I had intended to provide testimony in person, but due to the rescheduling of the public hearing to Thursday, May 4th I am unable to attend. Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.