

October 2, 2009

Glenn McNichol, President
PaMAGIC Board
Pennsylvania Mapping and
Geographic Information Consortium Board
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Dear Glenn,

This letter is to show support by the County Commissioners of Pennsylvania (CCAP) and the CCAP Technology Steering Committee for the creation of a statewide geospatial coordinating council (GIS council).

Counties across Pennsylvania have recognized the importance of geospatial technology investments for years. Since its inception in the early 1990's, GIS has become increasingly essential in meeting the needs of county and local government. What began with the tax assessment department in many counties has grown to become required functionality in emergency services (911 locator issues requiring readdressing), tax assessment (for property reassessment), economic development activities, historic preservation and other land use analyses and crime analysis and prevention.

As the needs in these areas continue to grow, GIS is becoming increasingly important in the day to day activities of governance. Recognizing these growing challenges, CCAP has been providing coordinating activities for county elected officials and county GIS staff. These efforts include:

- Formation of a statewide GIS forum for local government
- Creation of a county GIS Tool Team and GIS Coordination Team and
- Evolution of the GIS Tool and Coordination Teams into the County GIS Professional Association of Pennsylvania (GIS Pros)
- Testimony before the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee on HB 1304, Pennsylvania Geospatial Coordinating Council

CCAP realizes that as collectors and users of GIS data, counties fully recognize the need for coordination of data sharing. Counties often receive multiple requests for the same types of data from different private sector groups, as well as state agencies. One of the reasons we support the creation of this council is to eliminate the duplication of effort for all parties involved. These refocused resources can be used to create policy regarding data standards, as well as to provide technical and financial assistance to strengthen the architecture and enable Pennsylvania to be one step closer to interoperability for geospatial data.

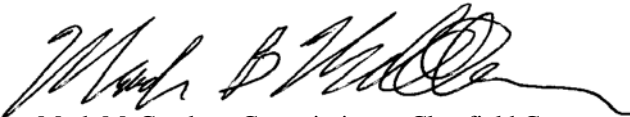
A GIS council will enable us to aggressively move forward by providing consistent statewide leadership on geospatial issues. This leadership will enable the commonwealth to promote geospatial information as a strategic resource to encourage co-operation and cost sharing among all levels of government, the private sector and academia. Additionally, with the council's leadership, geospatial policies can be proposed and recommendations can be offered to officials at all levels regarding priorities, responsibilities and funding of geospatial technologies in Pennsylvania.


Given all these prior efforts and expected future activities, we, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania Board of Directors, support the activities necessary to complete the development of a much needed council.

Sincerely,


James Kennedy, Commissioner, Butler County
President, Board of Directors


David Coder, Commissioner, Greene County
Chair, Board of Directors


Mark McCracken, Commissioner, Clearfield County
Chair, CCAP Technology Steering Committee


Joe Giles, Council Member, Erie County
Member, CCAP IT Steering Committee and CCAP President-Elect