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Nicholas Mastrodicasa
Digital Mapping Project Manager
State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
4451 Aircraft Drive, Suite H
Anchorage, AK 99502

Dear Mr. Mastrodicasa:

Thank you for including the USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, in the May 26, 2011, State/Federal Roundtable discussion on the serious matter of elevation data. This letter is in response to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities June 17, 2011 letter requesting support for the stated goals.

The USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, recognizes the need for consistent state-wide mapping in Alaska and supports the Alaska Statewide Mapping Initiative. Historically, programs providing national imagery and topographic mapping products have excluded Alaska. Various interest groups, including the Forest Service, have acquired imagery, digital elevation data, and maps as needed to support individual program needs and activities. This approach has resulted in data gaps, incompatibilities in data formats, and licensing limitations which make it problematic for Alaskan agencies to integrate each other's data. Collaborative efforts are the most efficient method to collect and distribute geospatial data.

The Alaska Region will continue to make its imagery, elevation and GIS data available to partner agencies, including making it available for distribution at the State's Alaska Mapped data clearing house. We will also continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with other state and federal agencies to fund data collections, including opportunities made available through the Alaska Statewide Mapping Initiative.

In order to facilitate coordinated data acquisitions with our state and federal partners, I encourage the formation of a forum where state and federal agency representatives can make unified recommendations to the statewide mapping programs and coordinate funding strategies.

Inquiries can be directed to Joe Calderwood, Information Management Geospatial and Technical Services Group Leader. Joe can be contacted at 907-586-7966 or jcalderwood@fs.fed.us

Sincerely,

BETH G. PENDLETON
Regional Forester

cc: Andrea Gehrke, Joe Calderwood

