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March 8, 2012

The Honorable Jeffery Zients  
Acting Director  
The Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Zients:

We are writing to follow up on our letter from March 8, 2011, in which we asked your agency to consider a critical project for Alaska that would require the coordination and cooperation of numerous federal agencies.

As previously described, Alaska is the only state in the United States that has not been digitally mapped on a statewide basis. Most states have completed or are refreshing their existing data. Alaska is lagging behind other states that are in some cases 20 years ahead of Alaska.

Currently, the US Geological Survey (USGS) topographical maps of Alaska are over 40 years old, inaccuracies of up to a quarter mile or more are commonplace and these maps do not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. A reliable base map is critical to control incoming layers of Geographical Information Systems used across all disciplines both public and private. None of the modern disaster preparedness and emergency management systems being deployed elsewhere in the nation will work in Alaska until the need for an accurate base map is resolved. Geospatial information is spread across many levels of government, but lacks means of organization. As a result, the economic benefits, disaster recovery initiatives, and government efficiencies go largely unrealized.

The Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative (SDMI) we reported last year is still developing the process and funding the collection, which will meet this need. Since its original \$6 million effort, the State of Alaska has contributed another \$1.4 million for Fiscal Year 2012 and authorized an additional \$3.7 million to be used in Fiscal Year 2013. Given the cost of the initiative and the scope and diversity of federal agencies that need and would benefit from this data collection, it is imperative that we address these needs and involve all stakeholders in this fiscal plan.

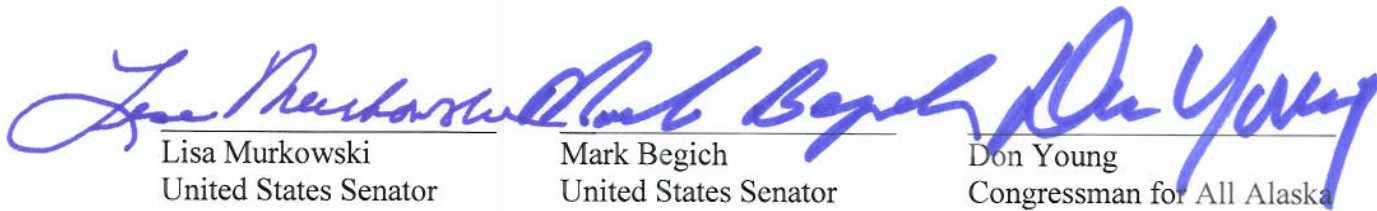
In a state that is 64 percent federally owned land, there are numerous federal agencies in addition to the USGS for which this initiative should be a priority, including many subordinate agencies of the Department of Interior; Department of Agriculture; Department of Transportation; Department of Defense; and the Department of Homeland Security. These mapping priorities include, but are not limited to:

- Aviation safety
- Coastal resources and Alaska Coastal Management Program and spill response shore zone mapping
- Emergency response
- Fire hazard mapping for critical and high value protection areas
- Forest resource mapping in southeast, northern, and south-central regions
- Gas line routing and permit support
- Global warming studies and response planning
- Land cover and terrain for major state parks
- Land planning; corridor analysis and statewide land sales program
- Land use permit authorizations with commercial recreation permits
- Oil and gas infrastructure management and monitoring
- Coastal erosion monitoring

The only way we will coordinate the efforts of all federal agencies is to have the White House assist in organizing a meeting of all federal stakeholders to develop a strategy by which each agency contributes a portion of the overall cost. Under the current budget constraints, no single agency has sufficient funds to finance this program. Quite simply, we need the leadership and support of the White House to develop a plan that provides for the funding needed for this initiative, and with a data set, that meet the requirements of every federal agency. We urge you to help coordinate a meeting of representatives of every affected agency in the state.

We thank you for your attention to this issue, and hope that you will be able to direct the efforts and assist in identifying discretionary funding within each agency that can help cover the cost of this critical initiative. Please contact Warren Wright (Senator Murkowski) at 202-224-6665, James Feldman (Senator Begich) at 202-224-3004 or Scott Leathard (Congressman Young) at 202-225-5765 for any assistance or coordination. We look forward to working together for a successful outcome.

Sincerely,



<p><i>Lisa Murkowski</i>  <hr/>         Lisa Murkowski          United States Senator</p>	<p><i>Mark Begich</i>  <hr/>         Mark Begich          United States Senator</p>	<p><i>Don Young</i>  <hr/>         Don Young          Congressman for All Alaska</p>
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cc: David Agnew, Director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs