

# University Consortium for Geographic Information Science

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To Members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives

The University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS) is an organization of United States universities and colleges, industry partners, and international affiliates whose purpose is to foster research and education in the field of Geographic Information Science (GIScience). UCGIS was founded in the early 1990's based on recognition that a diverse and broad-based organization was needed to sustain growth in GIScience within the US, allowing its delegates and partners to contribute to the well-being of the US and the world through advances in GIScience.

The UCGIS Executive Committee, on behalf of the UCGIS Board and Delegates endorses "A Proposal for National Economic Recovery, An Investment in Building National Geospatial Information Infrastructure, Building a National GIS". We recognize that the National GIS initiative proposal was formed from years of research and practice related to GIScience. It incorporates best available GIScience in many respects, and can add to the recovery and future sustainable development of the US economy.

UCGIS mission and goals align in many respects with the National GIS initiative. The UCGIS mission and associated goals are organized with three main thrusts – unify, facilitate, and benefit society. First, UCGIS "unifies" the research efforts of its member institutions and partners, providing ongoing research priorities for advancing theory and methods in GIScience, while assessing the current and potential contributions of GIScience to national scientific and public policy issues. The national geospatial information infrastructure in the proposal is an expansion of several ongoing efforts among federal, state, and local governments plus private industry and the not-for-profit sector to develop an infrastructure to which many UCGIS institutions have contributed over the years. Further refinement of publicly available information access within various national security constraints would enable an enhanced accountability of recovery activity. Second, the UCGIS "facilitates" educational development of its member institutions, expanding and strengthening GIScience education at all levels, while providing the organizational infrastructure to foster collaborative interdisciplinary research in GIScience. UCGIS institutions and partners throughout the country are responsible for educating and training a large number of the past, current, and future specialists who will move a National GIS forward. Third, but not least, UCGIS provides "benefit to society", promoting the ethical use of and access to geographic information, while fostering GIScience and analysis in support of national needs. UCGIS member institutions recognize the importance of fiscal accountability as a benefit to society, and can help implement a geospatial information infrastructure that assists with that accountability as "good government".

As those three mission thrusts align with the National GIS effort in many respects, UCGIS members look forward to supporting the National GIS initiative in fostering economic recovery and reinvestment in America in whatever ways appear best for the country.

On behalf of the Executive Committee and Respectfully,

Jack Sanders, Executive Director, University Consortium for Geographic Information Science