

Sustaining the National Geospatial Program as Critical National Infrastructure

The National Geospatial Program provides the trusted geospatial foundation that states, federal agencies, local governments, emergency managers, infrastructure planners, academia and non profit and private-sector users rely on every day. These core national datasets support safer communities, smarter infrastructure investments, better water and resource management, stronger emergency response, economic development, and more efficient government operations.

Speaking with the voice of the States, NSGIC supports continued Congressional authorization and sustained federal investment in the National Geospatial Program as essential national infrastructure. In the information age, geospatial data is no longer a specialized technical asset. It is a basic operating layer for government, industry, public safety, infrastructure, and the economy.



A major element of the National Geospatial Program is the 3D National Topography Model. 3DNTM is the foundation for the broader 3D Nation vision jointly advanced by USGS. It integrates high-resolution elevation and hydrography data into a unified 3D representation of the Nation's landscape, enabling consistent analysis across terrain and water systems from the peaks of our mountains to the depths of our waters.

This national capability supports practical decisions across infrastructure, flood risk, transportation, agriculture, public safety, energy, resource management, and economic development. It also provides a foundational data layer for emerging technologies, advanced modeling, digital twins, artificial intelligence, and other tools that depend on accurate, trusted information about the physical world.

Proposed Reductions Put Quality, Currency, and Trust at Risk

The FY 2027 [USGS Budget Justifications and Performance Information document](#) proposes a \$32.67 million and 27 FTE reduction in 3DNTM resources while stating that USGS will continue to acquire high-resolution elevation and hydrography data across the United States. NSGIC is concerned that, if enacted, this level of reduction would make it difficult to maintain the acquisition pace, quality assurance, and user confidence required for a trusted national framework dataset.

NSGIC is also concerned by the proposal to rely solely on automated processes for quality assurance. Automated tools are important, but they cannot fully replace expert review for nationally trusted elevation and hydrography data. Reducing human quality assurance would likely shift review costs to states, local governments, federal partners, and private users, creating duplication of effort and reducing confidence in the data.

Weakening 3DNTM would reduce the return on prior federal, state, and local investments. These programs provide value because they are coordinated, trusted, and broadly usable. If the national foundation becomes less current or less reliable, users across the country will either make decisions with weaker data or spend scarce resources recreating quality control processes that should be handled once at the national level. [The President's Council to Assess FEMA](#) states that outdated mapping leads to misunderstanding of risk, and suggests aligning floodplain standards with modernization of mapping.

Action Requested:

NSGIC respectfully requests strong legislative support for the continued authorization, sustained funding, and effective implementation of the National Geospatial Program and its core geospatial capabilities, including the 3D National Topography Model and Digital Coast.

NSGIC urges Congress to:

1. **Maintain funding at the previously enacted level of \$44.8 million for the 3DNTM program.**
2. **Maintain sufficient quality assurance capabilities** to support trusted and highly valued national elevation and hydrography data.
3. **Continue Congressional direction to DOI and USGS** to maintain, refresh, and advance 3DNTM, as established by Public Law 117–58.
4. **Support coordinated federal-state implementation** of national geospatial programs so states can help identify priorities, contribute data, reduce duplication, and turn federal investment into practical results on the ground.

About the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)

Since 1991, NSGIC has been the state led hub of national geospatial experts promoting coordinated, impactful, and efficient application of geographic Information systems (GIS) to best serve the nation. GIS and the spatial information it serves underpin much of the activities of government and the lives of the people of the nation.