

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley:

We write to respectfully request that you provide robust funding for the 3D National Topography Model (3DNTM) comprised of the 3D Elevation Program (3DEP), the 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP), and the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program administered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and codified by the National Landslide Preparedness Act (P.L. 116-323), in the FY 2027 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The 3DEP portion of 3DNTM continues to satisfy the growing demand for consistent, high-quality topographic data, and a wide range of other three-dimensional representations of the nation's natural and constructed features. The USGS has identified more than 600 applications that would benefit from enhanced elevation data. Data procured from 3DEP can be applied to flood risk management; infrastructure; water resources; aviation safety; telecommunications; homeland security; emergency response; precision agriculture; energy; pipeline safety; hydropower; and other areas. 3DEP promotes economic growth and facilitates resource development such as the critical minerals program.

3DNTM is as a progression of developments that began with the completion of the 3DEP baseline. The 3DEP baseline is being used to derive the 3D Hydrography Program data. The next generation of 3DEP also builds on the value of the baseline to improve and enable new applications that identify and monitor change to the natural and constructed environments. In the future, 3DEP and 3DHP data will be more fully integrated into a unified 3D model. In addition, lidar data from 3DEP helps provide the USGS Natural Hazards Program with the best available scientific information and tools to reduce the threat of injuries, fatalities, and economic loss from a variety of disasters caused by the natural hazards such as landslides, sinkholes, earthquakes, and volcanoes.

The USGS, with involvement from the private sector, states, and other stakeholders, conducted a 3D Nation Elevation Requirements and Benefits Study to determine and document the need for national elevation data within government and private markets. Together, the 3DNTM and 3DEP programs, managed by USGS and NOAA, offer an estimated annual benefit of \$10.8 billion to \$12 billion in enhanced, data-driven decision-making, such as flood risk management and

infrastructure. Full implementation is conservatively estimated to provide a return on investment of nearly 5:1.

We need to do more to fund programs and research efforts to prevent future natural disasters from becoming national tragedies. On January 5, 2021, the National Landslide Preparedness Act (P.L. 116-323) was signed into law, making landslides a national priority and authorizing 3DEP and the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program to better identify and understand landslide risks, coordinate with local and state agencies, and help improve emergency preparedness.

We are committed to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do everything we can to maximize the benefits for our constituents and for citizens across the country from the more than 600 public applications and business uses of enhanced elevation data.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



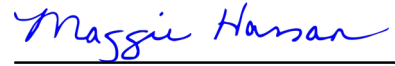
Peter Welch
United States Senator



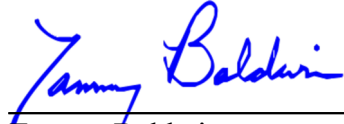
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



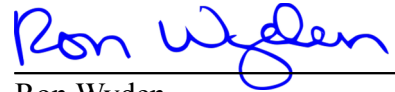
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator