April 29, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Chairman Cartwright and Ranking Members Granger and Aderholt:

We write to respectfully request that you provide robust funding for the Digital Coast Program (Digital Coast) established by P.L. 116-223, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in the FY 2023 Department of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The Digital Coast Act (P.L. 116-223), bipartisan legislation which passed the House and Senate in 2020 by voice votes, authorized the program at $4 million annually.

Now, more than ever, we have a great capacity to collect, analyze, and use data to create solutions to our most pressing challenges. The strong bipartisan support for this surveying, mapping, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and geospatial data program is a demonstration of its broad appeal and value to the nation's coastal communities. By consolidating coastal data from a variety of sources in one place and making it publicly accessible, NOAA's Digital Coast Program is helping the coastal management community better plan for resilience and prepare for storms, flooding, natural disasters, and other challenges that impact vulnerable coastal communities.

Data included in the Digital Coast ranges from surveying, mapping, geospatial, economic, demographic, and ecosystem data to satellite imagery. In addition to making this data publicly available online, the Digital Coast provides a wide array of visualization and prediction tools that dramatically improve the effectiveness and efficiency of coastal management projects across the country. Benefits associated with creating and operating this program far exceed the costs and NOAA predicts a 411 percent return on investment over the next 15 years. In addition to the return on investment, the Digital Coast has played a significant role in protecting communities and natural resources from the impacts of natural disasters. Furthermore, 75 percent of users of the Digital Coast surveyed by NOAA indicated that their projects would not have been possible without the Digital Coast.

We are committed to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do everything we can to maximize the benefits of using coastal surveying, mapping, GIS, and geospatial data for our constituents and for all citizens across the country. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
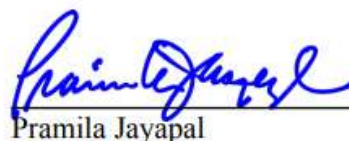Member of Congress

Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

Jenniffer González-Colón
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Bill Posey
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Alan S. Lowenthal
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