

UCGIS Policy Committee Meeting

Capitol Hill Club
300 First St SE
Washington, DC

Tuesday February 11, 2003

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Agenda

- discuss <http://www.ucgis.org/fp&Iformation.htm>
- summary of activities since summer mtg.
- support for NSGIC
- American Community Survey
- Homeland Security Amendment http://www.ucgis.org/fp&l_dhs02.htm
- Getis signing letter to president supporting technology
- Winter meeting
- Ideas for coming 6 months

Policy & Legislation Committee

Process for Creating and Disseminating UCGIS Policy Positions

(approved by Board Action, 6/29/02)

[Purpose](#)

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Purpose. UCGIS is a nationwide organization of universities and other institutions dedicated to promoting the development and informed use of GIS for the benefit of society. To achieve this goal, UCGIS monitors public policy debates, takes positions on key issues, and makes those positions known to policy-makers. This document outlines the procedures UCGIS follows in taking positions and the mechanisms it uses to disseminate its position. It was drafted with a focus on national issues, with Congress and federal agencies as the primary audience, but could be adapted to other audiences.

Issue Identification. Critical policy issues may be brought to the attention of the UCGIS Policy and Legislation Committee from a number of sources: UCGIS members themselves, sister organizations, and federal agencies. [NSGIC](#), for example, follows issues in Washington quite closely and distributes this information through its *Wollack Reports*. UCGIS follows issues related to the National Science Foundation through its membership in the [Coalition for National Science Funding](#). In most cases UCGIS will be reacting to an existing policy or piece of legislation, but conditions could motivate us to be proactive and take the initiative on our own.

UCGIS Position. UCGIS will take positions on issues that are important to GIScience and society. Positions may be recommended by the individual or organization bringing the issue to UCGIS, or will be developed by UCGIS itself.

Approval Process. Issues are brought to the Policy and Legislation Committee, which reviews the issue, develops or endorses a policy position, and brings a recommendation to the UCGIS Board: origin ->P&L Committee ->Board -> action.

Dissemination of UCGIS Position. The following vehicles are available for disseminating UCGIS position statements.

Vehicle	Description	Lead Time	Strengths & Weaknesses
Congressional Breakfast	Statement & handout at breakfast.	4 mos.	Delivers message to Congress, staff, and agencies present. No

			systematic follow-up.
Presidential Letter	Sent to key officials	2-4 wks.	Goes to key individual(s). Just one statement of many.
Listserv	email to delegates, members, or other interested people	2 wks.	Wide dissemination to GIS community. Little or no connection to policy makers.
Grassroots Enlistment	Enlist UCGIS delegates from key states to contact their members of Congress	2-4 wks.	Congressional members are most responsive to their own constituents. Very labor intensive and may not get positive response from delegate or members of Congress
Web Statements	Post positions on UCGIS website	2 wks.	Open to world. Passive dissemination.
Organizational Collaboration	Collaborate with sister organizations, members of UCGIS or not	6-12 months	Strength through unity; some are experienced in the policy arena. Slow to develop common stand.
Coalition for National Science Funding	Support for NSF through membership in another organization	6-12 months	Strong organization has the lead. UCGIS role is minimal.

Department of Homeland Security (11/02)

November 11, 2002

Senator Wayne Allard
United States Senate
525 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Allard:

UCGIS represents over 60 of the leading research and teaching institutions in our country involved in Geographic Information Science, including the University of Colorado. I am writing about your amendment to H.R. 5005. We are pleased to see that you added geospatial information to the issues faced by the new Department of Homeland Security. We think such information is critical to homeland security and public safety and are glad to see your amendment. We think that modification in a few areas would make the amendment even more useful.

- We suggest that “research and development” be added to those that you name as geospatial issues facing the new Department of Homeland Security. Many critical issues are beyond simple data acquisition. R&D can and should be done in both the private and academic sectors. In fact, Hunter College, City University of New York, partnered with New York City in developing geospatial information critical to the rescue and recovery operations at the World Trade Center and that partnership proved critical when the city’s system was lost when building #7 collapsed. The wording on page 3, lines 22-25, should not be limited to the private sector. The goal, after all, is good homeland security, not directing funds to a selected sector.
- We suggest that the role of the new Department of Homeland Security be limited in establishing geospatial information standards. This work is in the purview of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC). Any standards should be developed in cooperation with FGDC.
- We suggest that the list of disciplines covered on page 2, lines 3-6, of the amendment be expanded to include geographers, urban planners, computer scientists, environmental scientists, epidemiologists, and statisticians. Geographic Information Science is an umbrella term, but there are significant advantages to listing the many component disciplines.

Again, I am delighted with your interest in adding geospatial information to the responsibilities of the new Department of Homeland Security. With the modifications we suggest, we think the amendment could be more valuable.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Getis
President

cc: Joseph Lieberman
Fred Thompson