

# Statements of Support for the Digital Coast Act

## *Wisconsin*

"Quantum Spatial is grateful for Senator Baldwin's leadership on this bill. The Digital Coast program employs state of the art technology to provide vital information to those local officials responsible for public safety in coastal communities all along the Great Lakes and elsewhere," said **Kurt Allen, Vice President of Federal Vertical Lead at Quantum Spatial, Inc.**

"Our nation's coasts are not only where the majority of our population lives and works, much of our nation's natural heritage and wealth in natural resources are also concentrated in these areas. Senator Baldwin's bill will strengthen the Digital Coast program, which has helped The Nature Conservancy's Wisconsin, Great Lakes and coastal conservation staff access and share data and tools with partners to improve resilience, enhancing the environment and economies of communities across the country," said **Todd Holschbach, Director of Government Relations at The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin**

"Our coastal areas are used for a wide range of activities from the intensive use of industry to wildlife protection. Many of these uses are in direct competition with each other. Having accurate and in-depth data is critical for planners in Wisconsin in order to make the best, knowledge-based solution for the community and its citizens. The Digital Coast Act will help meet this need. We thank Senator Baldwin for her leadership on this important issue," said **Linda Stoll, President of Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association.**

"Wisconsin's coastal areas are one of our state's most important and treasured natural resources and this bill will provide the kind of current, robust geospatial data that is required by those who are making critical decisions on how these regions will be managed and maintained in the future. As a Wisconsin-based engineering and geospatial firm, Ayres Associates recognizes the many benefits this bill will provide our clients throughout the state and applaud Senator Baldwin's leadership on this important issue," said **Kirk M. Contrucci, Vice President of Ayres Associates**

"Thanks to Senator Baldwin for introducing the Digital Coast Act of 2015, a bipartisan effort needed to realize the concept of a digitally and geospatially enabled view of the Nation's coastlines as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. This bill addresses the urgent need recognized by the U.S. Oceans Commission, the PEW Commission, and several NAS reports, all of which have highlighted the need for up-to-date surveying, charting, remote sensing and analysis of our coast's, ports, shorelines and ocean resources critical to our Nations' environmental and economic well-being," said **David Hart, President of Continental Mapping Consultants, Inc.**

"Managing flood risk is a shared responsibility among the federal, state, and local level – private and public. As proof of the concept, the Digital Coast Partnership has already identified, developed and provided data and tools that are made widely and freely available to thousands of users. ASFPM is thrilled to support the Digital Coast Act which would officially authorize this effort and allow for the development of new datasets and tools that are critical for effective decision making by communities, states and others," said **Chad Berginnis, Executive Director of Association of State Floodplain Managers**

## *National*

"Senator Baldwin and Senator Murkowski's leadership on coastal issues supports the work local communities do to manage risk and protect people and property from extreme weather and changing conditions. This legislation will directly improve local disaster response and hazard mitigation planning. This bill will help local communities minimize potential loss of life and damage to infrastructure, private property, and conservation areas. The Digital Coast Act is an important step for effective coastal management. It will provide these data points with additional planning tools, resources, and training planners need to build stronger, more resilient coastal communities," said **Cynthia Bowen, President of the American Planning Association.**

"Through access to data, planning tools and training, Digital Coast directly addresses constituent needs through improved capacity and skills of coastal decision-makers charged with enhancing coastal community resilience and better management of our estuaries. The Digital Coast Act is governance done right through cost effective partnerships – thank you to Senators Baldwin and Murkowski for your bipartisan leadership in support of all the coastal communities that are critical to our nation's economy, said **Cory A. Riley, President of the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) and Director of the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.**

"MAPPS commends Senators Baldwin and Murkowski for their leadership in helping America's fragile coasts and shorelines through the Digital Coast Act. This legislation will create a program to utilize the extensive capabilities of the qualified private sector geospatial profession in the United States to implement recommendation of numerous reports that have highlighted the need for surveying, charting, remote sensing and geospatial data of America's coasts, harbors, ports, shorelines and ocean resources for economic growth, recreational activities, and conservation of our fragile coastal environment," said **John Palatiello, Executive Director of MAPPS.**

"The provisions of the Digital Coast Act will significantly enhance the Digital Coast project through the creation of a sustainable program to utilize geospatial technologies to map and monitor the coastal waterways of the United States, providing an invaluable benefit to the public, and to the professionals whose charge is to protect their health, safety, and welfare," said **Curtis W. Sumner, Executive Director of National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS).**

"The Digital Coast Act will increase the resiliency of coastal communities, as well as improve high accuracy mapping programs. This important legislation will allow NOAA's Office for Coastal Management to continue to develop new and useful tools and training to aid local planning and coastal management efforts," said **Molly Schar, Executive Director of the National States Geographic Information Council.**

"Planners in Alaska support this legislation because good data and information not only helps our Alaskan communities but also provides the competitive edge our nation needs to interact in global commerce and address the effects of our planet's changing environmental conditions," said **Lauren Driskill, President of Alaska Chapter of the American Planning Association**

"Coastal and community resilience are vital planning priorities in New Jersey. The information and insights provided by the Digital Coast Act will help New Jersey planners protect communities from future hazards and enable a smarter process for making decisions about how our cities and towns grow. Better data make for better plans and that benefits everyone in New Jersey. This legislation is an important step forward," said **Charles Latini, President of New Jersey Chapter of American Planning Association.**

A statement of support from the **Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition:**

"The Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition commends Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson for scheduling this hearing to markup S. 110, the Digital Coast Act of 2017. Prior to the end of the 114th Congress, the Senate unanimously passed S. 2325, the Digital Coast Act of 2015 sponsored in a bipartisan nature by Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Dan Sullivan (R-AK), and Cory Booker (D-NJ). Last April, this committee reported S. 2325 favorably by a unanimous vote and included a technical amendment sponsored by the Chairman. Companion legislation, H.R. 4738, was introduced in the 114th Congress in the House by Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD) and Don Young (R-AK). The Coalition also wishes to thank Sens. Baldwin, Murkowski, Sullivan and Booker once again for their leadership in introducing the current bill subject to this hearing, S. 110. The strong bipartisan support for this measure is a demonstration of its broad appeal and value to the nation's communities. By consolidating coastal data from a variety of sources in one place and making it publicly accessible, NOAA's Digital Coast project is helping the coastal management community better plan for storms, flooding, natural disasters, and other challenges that impact vulnerable coastal communities. Data included in the Digital Coast ranges from surveying, mapping and geospatial data to economic and demographic data to 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 around the country. Over the next 15 years, NOAA predicts a 411 percent return on investment from the Digital Coast project. In addition to the return on investment, the Digital Coast has played a significant role in protecting communities and natural resources from damaging natural disasters. Furthermore, 75 percent of Digital Coast users surveyed by NOAA indicated that their projects would not have been possible without the Digital Coast. We respectfully urge your action in reporting S. 110 favorably out of committee. In doing so, we deeply appreciate your recognition of the numerous benefits the Digital Coast can provide to coastal communities and those working to make them more resilient."