

## Statements of Support: Digital Coast Act 2019

“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.**

“The Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors (WSLS) commends Sen. Baldwin for her leadership in introducing this legislation which will create a program to implement the recommendations of numerous reports that have highlighted the need for surveying data of our coasts, harbors, ports, shorelines and resources for economic growth, recreational activities, and conservation of our fragile coastal environment,” **said Terry Van Hout, President of the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors.**

“The management of coastal resources when we know future conditions will be changing is dependent on high-quality, easily available data. Whether it is preparing for winter storms or examining a community’s flood exposure, the Digital Coast Act would build on the current digital coast platform to fill data gaps; determine constituent driven priorities; and integrate tools, training, and best practices. To help ensure our Great Lakes and oceanic coastal communities remain vibrant and healthy for the next century, the Association of State Floodplain Managers wholeheartedly supports this legislation,” **said Chad Berginnis, Executive Director of Association of State Floodplain Managers.**

“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.**

“The Digital Coast Act is a balanced approach to environmental protection and economic development in our valuable coastal areas. This bill authorizes a successful project that utilizes the talent of the private sector and intergovernmental agencies by providing data and services that are essential to the economic engine that is coastal America, while conserving it's precious natural resources through geospatial data and related activities,” **said John Palatiello, Founder of U.S. GEO.**

“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.**

“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.**

“The Digital Coast Act is a critical piece of legislation that will both streamline and bolster our nation’s efforts at producing, managing and integrating highly accurate geospatial data along our nation’s coastlines. In a collaborative manner, this data will be used for the development of smarter coastal infrastructure, improve our resiliency to extreme weather, improve emergency response, and support the efforts of our state and local government partners. This legislation should be supported by more than just coastal states as every tax payer in the United States benefits by innovative management of these important economic, environmental and recreational regions. I commend Senator Tammy Baldwin and her continued leadership on this vital issue and look forward to seeing this bill signed into law during the 116th Congress.” **said Brian Raber, President of MAPPS – a national association of geospatial firms.**

“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 Kurt Christiansen, President of the American Planning Association.**

“Thank you to Senator Baldwin for sponsoring the Digital Coast Act. Working in partnership with NOAA, state and territory coastal zone management programs provide critical long term planning for coastal communities that balances the need for economic development and resource protection to ensure coastal areas are economic drivers today and in the future. The Digital Coast is an essential tool in a coastal manager’s toolbox to support our nation’s coastal resources and economies with planning tools, data, and training,” **said Bradley Watson, Executive Director of the Coastal States Organization.**

**A statement of support from the Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition:** “The Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition commends Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) for introducing the Digital Coast Act of 2019. The Coalition also wishes to thank Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD) and Don Young (R-AK) once again for their leadership in introducing the companion bill in the House. 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, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Digital Coast project is helping the coastal management community better plan for storms, flooding, natural disasters, and other challenges that impact vulnerable coastal and Great Lakes 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 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. By having bipartisan and bicameral introduction of the Digital Coast Act, 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.”