



February 24, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the member firms in MAPPSS, I would like to commend your Administration for speaking out against Citigroup, a recipient of \$45 billion in TARP funds, for its proposal to spend nearly \$50 million on a corporate jet.

MAPPSS (www.mapps.org) is a national association of private sector firms engaged in the aerial surveying and mapping or “geospatial” business. Our member firms operate their own aircraft, and aerial cameras and sensors, to produce geospatial information for commercial and governmental clients. A majority of our members are small business of 500 employees or less. As you know, small business creates about 80% of the jobs in our economy.

We respectfully request that your administration apply the same principles to agencies of the U.S. Government (and state and local government spending Federal tax dollars) as you applied to Citigroup. That is, the acquisition of costly and low priority aircraft and associated equipment is not in the taxpayers’ best interest.

The MAPPSS membership is aware of many Federal agencies, as well as, state governments (e.g. state highway or transportation departments) that are spending Federal tax dollars to purchase, own and operate aircraft, aerial cameras and airborne sensors that duplicate and unfairly compete with the private sector. These government activities are killing jobs, increasing unemployment, and making it harder for small business to survive.

One example of a Federal agency that is duplicating resources that are found in the private sector is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA continues to acquire airplanes and digital aerial sensors, even though the Commerce Department’s Inspector General found that NOAA’s operation of this activity is more expensive than the private sector and recommended that NOAA privatize this activity (*NOAA’s Light Aircraft Fleet Should Be Privatized*, STD-9952-8-001) and such findings were affirmed by a separate NOAA study, (*NOAA Light Aircraft Operations: An Independent Internal Assessment*).

Presently, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is planning to acquire a digital airborne camera (Solicitation 301819Q073), even though the agency is aware that there are numerous small business with the same or superior equipment that can meet the agency’s aerial imagery needs.

Finally, many state transportation departments use Federal Highway money to acquire airplanes and cameras, even though Federal law discourages such acquisitions (Section 306 of title 23, United States Code).

At a time when unemployment is rising, the economy is declining, and a \$780+ billion stimulus package to jump-start the economy and create private sector jobs has been enacted, government agencies (both Federal and State) should not be using tax dollars to engage in unfair and counter-productive government competition with and duplication of the private sector. By contracting for aerial photography, mapping and related geospatial services, government at all levels can help save and create private sector jobs.

We respectfully urge the attention and appropriate action of your Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marvin E. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Marvin E. Miller, CP, PPS, PLS
President

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