

## *Unfair Government Competition with Private Geospatial Firms*

The Federal government has more than 850,000 employees who are involved in performing commercially available activities. These are activities that can be found in the “Yellow Pages” and from private companies, including small business, on Main Street, USA. Surveying, mapping and other “geospatial” services are prime examples of commercial activities in which the Federal government duplicates and competes with the private sector.

There is also a dangerous trend toward “in-sourcing” -- the conversion of work currently performed by private contractor firms to performance by Federal government employees -- and building in-house government capabilities at the expense of private sector jobs creation in the geospatial market. Federal agencies are purchasing equipment, in some cases with “Stimulus” (ARRA) funding, to build their own agency capacity to perform with Federal employees those geospatial activities that should be performed by the private sector. In this difficult economy, government agencies should be utilizing private geospatial firms to the maximum extent practical, not directly competing against them.



Congress has tied the hands of agencies in utilizing the private sector. In 2009, Congress passed language in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, Public Law 111-5 and in the 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Public Law 111-117, allowing “in-sourcing” while restricting contracting out to the private sector. In October 2009, Congress passed language in the Defense Authorization, Public Law 111-84, placing a moratorium on OMB Circular A-76 public-private competitions. A-76 competitions bring the best value to the taxpayer regardless of whether the activity stays in-house or is contracted out. MAPPS urges Congress to repeal these provisions and lift restrictions on the private sector’s ability to compete for government contracting opportunities. A robust, qualified and competent private sector exists within the mapping profession and government at all levels should utilize it, not duplicate or compete with it.

In 2011, Representative John J. “Jimmy” Duncan, Jr. (R-TN) and Senator John Thune (R-SD) introduced the “Freedom from Government Competition Act” (FFGCA), H.R. 1474/S. 785. FFGCA will codify the “Yellow Pages” test, applied by Mayors and Governors, both Democrat and Republican, that says if you can find firms in the Yellow Pages providing products or services that the government is also providing, then the service should be subject to market competition to break up the government monopoly and prove a better value to the taxpayer. This bill will not only make government smaller and more efficient, but it can save up to \$27 billion annually.

**ACTION REQUESTED: MAPPS respectfully urges members of Congress to offer amendments to appropriations bills and authorization legislation calling for utilization of the private sector to the maximum extent practical for geospatial activities. MAPPS opposes limits on the ability of agencies to utilize the private sector and urges members of Congress to reject such provisions. Additionally, Representatives are asked to cosponsor H.R. 1474, the Freedom from Government Competition Act by contacting Don Walker in Representative Duncan’s office at 5-5435. Senators can cosponsor S. 785 by contacting Adrian Arnakis in Senator Thune’s office at 4-2321. For more information, contact John Byrd, MAPPS Government Affairs Manager, at [jbyrd@mapps.org](mailto:jbyrd@mapps.org) or (703) 787-6996.**