

NSPS Government Affairs Update
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This report, prepared for the October 2025 NSPS Board of Directors and Government Affairs Committee meetings, provides an update on issues and activities in the NSPS Government Affairs program, as authored by Miller/Wenhold Government Affairs, the NSPS government affairs consultants for the current 119th Congress, covering 2025-2026.

Major NSPS Highlights Since March 2025

- As a result of the March 2025 NSPS Day on the Hill, Congressional action has been taken on each of the three issues: 1) DOD TAP workforce development amendment was offered for consideration before the House Rules Committee (September 8); 2) Sense of the Congress Resolution on professional licensure was introduced in the House (September 4); and 3) Monument Preservation language was included in the bipartisan FEMA Reform legislation adopted by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (September 3).
- In April, NSPS joined 90 other organizations on a letter to President Trump and a letter to Congress, stating the groups urge the President “to work with the FCC to address the harm from Ligado's proposed terrestrial network to critical GPS, satellite communications, and weather forecasting services by staying the order, addressing the previously unavailable information contained in the NAS report.”
- On July 14, the House passed H.R. 900, the Sinkhole Mapping Act, by voice vote; NSPS worked with the bill sponsors to get the USGS 3DEP language to Section 2 of the bill language into the bill prior to introduction this Congress.
- On August 26, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd and NSPS Government Affairs Consultant John Palatiello met with staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to discuss DOI implementation of the FLAIR Act.
- On August 27, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd and NSPS Government Affairs Consultant John Palatiello participated in a COFPAES staff meeting with staff of the House Small Business Committee on expected Federal legislation and executive branch actions related to A&E (including surveying and mapping) procurement.
- On September 9, Reps. Troy Downing (R-MT) and Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX) introduced H.R. 5229, bipartisan legislation to provide mapping reforms to FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The “Improvement of Mapping, Addresses, Geography, Elevations, and Structures (IMAGES) Act of 2025” would require surveying and mapping data collected be made available to the public, which can be used in flood risk management, flood map appeals, infrastructure, water resources, aviation safety, fire prevention, and telecommunications, and more; NSPS directors Matt Morris of Montana and John Watson of Texas were quoted in the Congressional news release.
- On September 10, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd, working through the Business Coalition for Fair Competition (BCFC), of which NSPS is a member, met next door to The White House, with policy staff of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on reforms to federal policy impacting government contracting and use of the private sector; NSPS also took the opportunity to highlight the “yellow pages test” bill introduced earlier this year by Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL). H.R. 1554, the “Freedom from Government Competition Act” (FFGCA), a bill long supported by NSPS.
- On September 30, COFPAES, of which NSPS is a member, submitted extensive comments and recommendations to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy/General Services Administration/Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Council for its Revolutionary FAR Overhaul (RFO) on revisions to FAR

Part 36.6 and other sections of the FAR to strengthen and clarify the application and implementation of the Brooks Act's qualifications based selection (QBS) process for architecture, engineering and related services, including surveying and mapping.

NSPS Government Affairs Issues

Appropriations/CR/Shutdown

On October 1, the Federal Government entered into a shutdown following the lack of funding legislation for FY 2026 being moved by Congress and enacted into law by the Administration.

Reconciliation

On July 4, President Trump signed into law the "One Big Beautiful Bill" (H.R. 1), otherwise known as the Reconciliation Bill (P.L. 119-21), after narrowly passing the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The bill includes extension and expansion of the 2017 Jobs Creation and Tax Act (JCTA), increased spending for defense, new energy development and production initiatives, reductions in certain social programs to address improper payments and funding for resumption of construction of the border wall.

Department of Commerce

Artificial Intelligence

In January, President Donald Trump signed an executive order titled "Removing Barriers to American Leadership in AI," which revokes former President Joe Biden's 2023 executive order on AI. Biden focused on providing U.S. industry with guidance for oversight and safety tests of AI systems that pose risks to national security, the economy, or public health. Trump emphasizes eliminating regulatory obstacles to foster AI innovation, aiming to solidify the United States' global position.

Broadband Mapping

On June 6, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) issued a 21-page Policy Notice instituting critical reforms to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. Reforms will remove rules favoring particular technologies and eliminate unnecessary regulatory burdens.

Digital Coast

The current Digital Coast Act authorization expired on September 30. On June 30, Representatives Dave Min (D-CA) and Rob Wittman (R-VA) introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, H.R. 4256, to reauthorize NOAA's Digital Coast program through 2030. NSPS has been leading a coalition of stakeholders supporting the bill. A companion bill, S 2245, was introduced in the U.S. Senate on July 10 by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

On September 17, the House version of the Digital Coast Reauthorization Act, H.R. 4256, was subject to a markup hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee and approved by the full committee. NSPS cosigned a coalition letter in August to Committee leadership requesting the hearing for the bill which now has 11 bipartisan cosponsors. The next step for the bill is floor consideration. The Senate bill, S. 2245, was scheduled for a markup in the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee on October 8, but that hearing was postponed.

NSPS led the efforts to secure eleven bipartisan House members to cosign a House letter in May 2025 led by Reps. Kevin Mullin (D-CA) and Buddy Carter (R-GA) requesting the Appropriations Committees to "fully fund the Digital Coast Program" at \$4 million, as authorized.

The Senate Appropriations Committee Report included this language for FY2026:

Digital Coast.—The Committee provides \$3,500,000 for the implementation of the Digital Coast Act (Public Law 116–223).

In January, NSPS participated in a presentation on "Digital Coast Act: Accomplishments and Reauthorization" at the NOAA Coastal GeoTools Conference in Wilmington, NC. NSPS is a member and leader of the Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition which supports NOAA's Digital Coast Program and the presentation by NSPS Government Affairs Consultant John Palatiello.

Great Lakes Mapping Act

On April 8, H.R. 2731, the "Great Lakes Mapping Act of 2025" was introduced by Reps. Lisa McClain (R-MI) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI), and now with 17 bipartisan cosponsors. Section 2 authorizes NOAA mapping for \$50 Million through FY2029 while producing a high-resolution map of the lakebeds of the Great Lakes and collecting and processing high-resolution bathymetric data about the lakebeds of the Great Lakes. The bill also references Digital Coast Act and the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act.

Spectrum Policy

On September 10, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John "JB" Byrd attended the National Telecommunication and Information Administration's (NTIA) 2025 Spectrum Policy Symposium in Washington, DC. Keynote speakers included U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and NTIA Administrator Arielle Roth, a former aide to Chairman Cruz when she served as a policy director on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. Following her prepared remarks, Byrd briefly spoke with Administrator Roth and communicated the critical work that NTIA is doing to help and promote NOAA as part of national spectrum policy.

Department of Education

Workforce Development

NSPS has joined more than 600 other associations and professional societies in a coalition to support the "Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act". This bipartisan legislation would expand qualified expenses under 529 savings plans to include postsecondary training and credentialing programs, such as licenses and non-governmental certifications, and provide valuable tax-advantaged resources to more workers pursuing career growth, mid-career changes or alternative career pathways. In the 119th Congress, Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA) reintroduced the bill, H.R. 1151 with 202 bipartisan cosponsors. The "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," a reconciliation package signed into law on July 4, 2025, includes the "Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act".

On July 15, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the U.S. Department of Education announced that they are implementing a workforce development partnership to create an integrated federal education and workforce system. DOL will take on a greater role in administering the adult education and family literacy programs funded under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs funded by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Administering Perkins V/WIOA through DOL will facilitate streamlined services for states and grantees, ultimately benefiting students and adult learners throughout America.

Department of Health and Human Services/FDA

In February, Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ) introduced H.R.1178, the Alpha-gal Allergen Inclusion Act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to add alpha-gal to the definition of "major food allergen". Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to red meat or other products containing alpha-gal, impacting hundreds of thousands of Americans across the nation. The surveying profession is impacted by tick-borne diseases and NSPS has consulted with staff of the Congressman. Alpha Gal Syndrome (AGS) is the meat allergy that develops from the Lone star Tick bite and there is no cure currently. Land

Surveyors across the country are at risk of this. Land surveyors get bit by ticks all the time. Alpha gal / mammal products are in almost every medicine but not listed to the public. Going to the pharmacy or grocery store with AGS is problematic. If a surveyor eats the wrong thing, then they may end up sick in bed for 1 to 6 days at a time. With 29 bipartisan cosponsors, the bill was subject to a July 9 hearing held by the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Department of Homeland Security/FEMA

FEMA/NFIP Reform

On September 9, Reps. Troy Downing (R-MT) and Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX) introduced H.R. 5229, bipartisan legislation to provide mapping reforms to FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The "Improvement of Mapping, Addresses, Geography, Elevations, and Structures (IMAGES) Act of 2025" would require surveying and mapping data collected be made available to the public, which can be used in flood risk management, flood map appeals, infrastructure, water resources, aviation safety, fire prevention, and telecommunications, and more.

The House Appropriations Committee Report included this language for FY2026:

Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis Program \$312,750,000

Monument Preservation (NOTE: 2025 Day on the Hill Issue)

NSPS is requesting legislation to enable property owners impacted by a natural disaster (wildfire, hurricane, tornado, etc.) to be eligible for assistance to preserve and re-establish destroyed survey monumentation (e.g. property corners) that are destroyed by the disaster, in order to preserve their property rights, return to their home or business, and rebuild. While the primary agency impacted is FEMA within DHS, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture will also have roles to play and especially as coordinating with Governors and other local stakeholders.

On September 3, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee advanced the Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025 (H.R. 4669). The bill streamlines the federal government's disaster response and recovery programs while also making FEMA a cabinet-level agency once again that is directly accountable to the President. NSPS worked closely with Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and Sharice Davids (D-KS) as these lawmakers sponsored language found in Section 216 amending the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by covering the cost of replacement through financial assistance for replacement of such residence for a total loss, including any necessary site preparation work such as land surveys.

Department of the Interior

3DEP

On March 31, H.R. 2250, the "National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act of 2025" was introduced by Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-WA), and now with 8 bipartisan cosponsors. Section 3 reauthorizes USGS 3DEP for \$40 Million through FY20230. The House Natural Resources Committee approved the bill via a markup session on June 25. On May 6, S. 1626, the "National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act of 2025" was introduced by Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA). Section 3 reauthorizes USGS 3DEP for \$40 Million through FY20230. The Senate Commerce Committee approved the bill via a markup session on May 21.

On August 4, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John "JB" Byrd attended on online meeting with the acting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Budget Examiner for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as part of the USGS 3DEP Coalition that NSPS coordinates to discuss the FY2027 USGS 3DEP Budget.

On August 6, USGS hosted the annual webinar, which used to be known as the Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for USGS 3DEP, now rebranded as the 3DNTM Data Collaboration Announcement (DCA) to reflect how both USGS 3DEP and 3DHP serve as the underpinning of 3DTMN. The data acquisition partnerships for both the 3DEP) and the 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP) are included as part of the USGS 3D National Topography Model (3DNTM). The process for partnerships in 3DEP acquisition began in 2015 with the purpose to provide a fair and open means of cost-sharing between USGS and other stakeholders. The best practices established in the BAA are essential to and will be leveraged in the new DCA process.

NSPS has been a leader in efforts to ensure the program is fully funded at \$146 million per year. In May 2025, NSPS led the efforts to secure twenty-five bipartisan House members to cosign a House letter, and nine Senators to cosign the Senate letter. The Senate letter was led by Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK), and the House letter was led by Reps. Susan DelBene (D-WA) and Jeff Crank (R-CO). The letters request “robust funding” from the Appropriations Committees.

The House Appropriations Committee Report included this language for FY2026:

\$43,905,000 for the 3D Elevation Program, which includes \$6,000,000 for the coverage of Federal lands in the western States. Additionally, the Survey should expand collaboration and integration of hydrography data within 3DEP, including developing a detailed plan and budget request for the 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP). Recognizing the importance of hydrography data, the recommendation includes \$1,000,000 for 3DHP.

The Senate Appropriations Committee Report included this language for FY2026:

Three-Dimension Elevation Program [3DEP] is maintained at the fiscal year 2024 enacted funding level. The Committee appreciates the progress made on 3DEP to allow for the integration of current elevation and hydrography data and expects this progress to continue. The Committee recommends no less than \$10,000,000 for the Alaska mapping and map modernization initiative, which includes modernizing Alaskan hydrography datasets. The National Geospatial Program will continue its role in advancing the goals, objectives, and approaches collaboratively developed as part of the AMEC Alaska Coastal Mapping Strategy, to include collection and distribution of topography and orthoimagery in coastal areas.

FLAIR Act

NSPS is now seeking Congressional oversight of Federal agencies responsible for implementing a major legislative victory in the 2022 enactment of the Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform (FLAIR) Act. This law provided for a current, accurate inventory (“cadastre”) of Federal land owned by the Department of the Interior as well as the U.S. Forest Service. Agencies failed to meet a deadline in the law for a report to Congress on its implementation. The FLAIR Act, a top legislative priority for NSPS for several years, will assist surveyors when doing survey records research or building a GIS by making such data access and integration much more efficient. In March, Miller/Wenhold sent a detailed letter to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum urging prompt action on these now seriously overdue deliverables to Congress.

On August 26, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd and NSPS Government Affairs Consultant John Palatiello met with staff of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to discuss DOI implementation of the FLAIR Act.

Geospatial Governance -- COGO/FGDC/NGAC/GDA

OMB has determined that the Geospatial Data Act (GDA) guidance will be provided through a revision of Circular A-16. The National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) provides advice and recommendations on national geospatial policy and management issues, the development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), and the implementation of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018. The NSDI promotes

geospatial data sharing across all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors, and the academic community.

In October 2024, the Coalition of Geospatial Organizations (COGO), of which NSPS is a member, released its third Assessment from its ongoing review of the U.S. National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). This Assessment serves as a periodic evaluation of the condition of the nation's geospatial data infrastructure, (eight national Framework data themes: addresses, cadastral, elevation, geodetic control, governmental units, hydrography, orthoimagery and transportation), which, like other forms of public works, is essential for our economy, health, safety, and activities of daily life.

National GIS Day

In November 2024, then-Representative John Curtis (R-UT) and Representative Pete Aguilar (D-CA) introduced H. Res. 1583, expressing support for National GIS Day, November 20. In a news release announcing the resolution, Rep. Curtis recognized NSPS and included a quote from NSPS President Davey Edwards.

Sinkhole Mapping

On July 14, the House passed H.R. 900, the Sinkhole Mapping Act, by voice vote; NSPS worked with the bill sponsors to get the USGS 3DEP language to Section 2 of the bill language into the bill prior to introduction this Congress. FSMS and NSPS provided letters and/or quotes in support of the bill.

Snowpack Mapping

On June 10, H.R. 3857, the "Snow Water Supply Forecasting Reauthorization Act" was introduced by Representatives Jeff Hurd (R-CO) and Joe Neguse (D-CO) and a legislative hearing was held June 24 in the House Natural Resources Committee. Section 2 of the bill modernizes the program to include commercial options for airborne laser altimetry; airborne imaging spectroscopy; integrated physics-based snowpack and hydrologic modeling; and other technologies that the Secretary determines are likely to provide more accurate or timely snowpack measurement data commensurate with operational water management needs. In late July, S. 2437, the "Snow Water Supply Forecasting Reauthorization Act" was introduced by Sens. John Hickenlooper (D-CO) and John Curtis (R-UT).

USGS & DOI Leadership

On October 7, the U.S. Senate confirmed Ned Mamula of Pennsylvania to be the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey by a vote of 51-47. In addition, on September 18, Andrea Travnicek was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of Interior. Travnicek will once again serve under Doug Burgum, this time in the Interior Department. Travnicek served as Director of the North Dakota Department of Water Resources under then-Gov. Doug Burgum.

Department of Labor

Davis-Bacon

In June 2024, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas issued its decision on a lawsuit filed by the Association Builders and Contractors (ABC), granting a nationwide preliminary injunction that blocks some provisions in the U.S. Department of Labor's final rule expanding the Davis-Bacon Act. The ruling comes in response to a November 2023, complaint filed by the Association of Builders and Contractors (ABC) challenging the controversial final rule released in August 2023 which made drastic revisions to the Davis-Bacon Act and Related Acts' regulations that apply to federal and federally assisted construction projects, along with a similar suit by the Associated General Contractors (AGC). The complaint, on which ABC coordinated with NSPS, addressed the classification of survey crews as "laborers and mechanics" under the act's regulations. While the injunction did not specifically impact the survey crew provisions, it sets a precedent favorable to the professional status of surveying. That decision is being appealed by the Biden Administration.

While the new rule continues to be very unclear and not definitive as to when members of survey crews are "laborers and mechanics," but it also rejects the NSPS request that rules follow the 1962 ruling by then-Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, who served in the cabinet of President John F. Kennedy. Secretary Goldberg's ruling stated the act applies to members of survey crews only to the extent they "perform manual work, such as clearing brush and sharpening stakes," which he said "are not commonplace." The final rule also made disparaging comments about surveying not being a "profession" inasmuch as many states do not require a college degree for entry into the field and thus is not a "learned profession".

On May 12, the SBA Office of Advocacy submitted public comments to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recommending repeal of the updated DBA Regulations:

*Updating the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts Regulations. This rule updates regulations issued under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA). The rule impacts small businesses with federal construction contracts exceeding \$2,000. The final rule expanded coverage of the DBRA to additional industries and changed the calculation of prevailing wages which increased pay. Specifically, the DBRA coverage expanded to small businesses including prefabrication businesses, material suppliers, truck drivers, demolition companies, flaggers, **surveyors**, and green technology businesses. Advocacy is concerned that DOL underrepresented costs to small businesses in this rule by not accounting for administrative costs, increased wages, and changes in enforcement requirements on small businesses. This rule is currently in federal litigation and parts of it have been stayed. Advocacy recommends this rule be repealed.*

Earlier this summer, Miller/Wenhold Capitol Strategies, on behalf of NSPS, wrote to the political leadership of the Department of Labor seeking a repeal of the survey crew provisions in the August 23, 2023 Biden-era Davis Bacon rules.

In 2013, the Obama Administration issued AAM 212 seeking Davis-Bacon Act expansion to more technician-level surveying activities, and the Trump Administration's rescission of the Obama order, AAM 235, issued in 2020 after an extensive lobbying campaign by NSPS. The substance of AAM 212 was reintroduced in the Biden Administration rulemaking made final in August 2023.

Occupational Licensing (NOTE: 2025 Day on the Hill Issue)

On September 4, Rep. John Joyce (R-PA) reintroduced a "Sense of the Congress" resolution H.Con.Res. 47 on design professional licensure. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Education and Workforce. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) is soon expected to be the lead Democrat on the resolution. This Congressional resolution distinguishes the important role licensing of design professionals plays in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare in the current debate over occupational licensing reform. The design professions include but are not limited to architecture, engineering, surveying and mapping. The resolution, although non-binding, sends a signal to states that they should not affect these professions in occupational licensing reform. While the case for reform of licensing in some occupations is desirable, bills introduced in some state legislatures are too broadly drafted and fail to exempt or recognize the importance of licensing of design professionals. The introduction of this resolution sends a strong message from Congress to the states that care should be taken to preserve the necessary and legitimate licensing of architects, engineers and surveyors. In August 2023, members of the Pennsylvania Society of Land Surveyors (PSLS) joined a meeting with Rep. Joyce, a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Committee, hosted by Eric Gladhill, LS, at his firm's office in Gettysburg, PA. Joyce discussed the benefit to the public of professional licensure for surveyors and engineers, and the NSPS issue paper on the topic. The Congressman's father was a professional surveyor and engineer. NSPS Government Affairs Consultant John Palatiello and NSPS Federal Lobbyist John "JB" Byrd attended the meeting.

Department of Transportation

Comprehensive Infrastructure Legislation

In November 2021, President Biden signed into law H.R. 3684, the “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA),” now Public Law 117-58, the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill. November 15, 2025 will be the 4th Anniversary of the bipartisan IIJA.

DBE

On October 3, USDOT issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) removing long-standing race- and sex-based presumptions in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. Instead, all applicants must now provide individualized proof of social and economic disadvantage. This raises immediate questions about how certifications will be handled and how DBE participation will be tracked on new and existing state DOT federally funded contracts. This IFR does NOT affect small business set asides or goals. Key changes of the ruling include:

- 1) Re-certification Required: Every currently certified DBE must undergo reevaluation. Firms will be required to submit new documentation and personal narratives to establish eligibility.
- 2) Suspension of Goals and Counting: Until reevaluation is complete, recipients may not set DBE contract goals or count DBE participation toward existing goals. This could impact reporting on current projects.
- 3) Tracking Requirements Changed: Collection and reporting of race and sex data for bidders and DBE certifications will be eliminated.
- 4) Higher Documentation Burden: Firms must now submit individualized evidence of disadvantage, which may increase certification time and costs.

Drones

On August 7, the FAA posted the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on the Beyond Visual Line of Sight. It proposed performance-based regulations to enable the design and operation of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) at low altitudes beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) and for third-party services, including UAS Traffic Management (UTM).

EV Charging Infrastructure

In February, the Federal Highway Administration announced the suspension of a Biden-era electric vehicle charging network.

LiDAR Restriction

On July 29, H.R. 4802, the “*Securing Infrastructure from Adversaries Act*” was introduced by Reps. Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and Julia Brownley (D-CA). The bill prohibits USDOT from using or procuring foreign adversary Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) digital mapping technology to create 3-D maps with millimeter-level data of surrounding environments. The legislation does have exemptions for motor vehicles.

PHMSA

PHMSA’s most recent authorization expired on September 30, 2023. With the new Congress, three different committees in Congress will work on drafting and progressing legislation reauthorizing the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), including the Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety (PIPES) Act. The three Committees are: House Energy and Commerce Committee; Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; and the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

On July 22, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on pipeline safety. Last Congress, that Committee approved the Pipeline Safety, Modernization and Expansion Act of 2024, H.R. 7655, to reauthorize the Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) for five years. On September 11, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee introduced the Promoting Innovation in Pipeline Efficiency and Safety (PIPES) Act of 2025, H.R. 5301, to reauthorize PHMSA for four years using \$804 million overall. Section 16 requires a Geohazard Mitigation Study whereby the Government Accountability Office (GAO)

would study Federal and state requirements relating to geohazards, including seismicity, land subsidence, erosion, and other potential natural hazards that could impact pipeline safety. Section 18 highlights Excavation Damage Prevention by updating PHMSA's assessment criteria for State Damage Prevention Programs and describes additional leading practices state one-call programs should consider implementing to prevent excavation damage to pipelines and other underground utilities. Section 19 authorizes an Integrity Management Study by the National Academies to understand the effectiveness of integrity management regulations and their impact on safety in high consequence areas. Section 24 establishes a Pipeline Safety Voluntary Information-Sharing System to encourage the sharing of pipeline safety data and information and authorizes \$31 million over four years for this purpose. H.R. 5301 approved by House T&I Committee yesterday, September 17. Eventually, the two House committees must reconcile their respective bills.

On October 6, the Senate Commerce Committee Leadership introduced S. 2975, the Pipeline Integrity, Protection, and Enhancement for Leveraging Investments in the Nation's Energy to assure Safety, or PIPELINE Safety Act of 2025. The bill reauthorizes the PHMSA pipeline safety program for five years and authorizes \$1.65 billion in funding. The legislation includes key measures to reduce pipeline-related fatalities and injuries, advance the development of new pipeline safety technologies, enhance safety inspections and enforcement efforts, and promote education for local communities on PHMSA's work. Section 204 requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to submit a report to Congress on PHMSA's management of the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS). This report would describe how and when PHMSA updates the high consequence area data contained in the NPMS, what sources of scientific data are used for those updates, and how such data is validated for accuracy. This section would also require PHMSA to initiate a rulemaking within two years of enactment to ensure NPMS data that is submitted to the agency by pipeline operators has spatial accuracy within +/- 50 feet of a transmission pipeline. Section 211 would add several criteria to the minimum requirements for state one-call damage prevention programs, which states must adopt to receive damage prevention grants. These criteria reflect best practices for one-call programs and are intended to reduce the number of excavation-related pipeline accidents and incidents. This section would also add criteria PHMSA must use to determine the effectiveness of state damage prevention programs. Section 212 would establish a confidential voluntary information-sharing system (VIS) program to encourage the sharing of pipeline safety data and information to improve pipeline safety. The program would bring together members from relevant Federal and state pipeline safety agencies, pipeline operator representatives, and environmental, safety, and labor groups who will analyze information received and prepare reports addressing lessons learned, process improvements, new technologies and practices, and other relevant safety information. Section 214 would codify the existing PHMSA allowance for pipeline operators to utilize drones and satellites to conduct required visual inspections of pipeline rights-of-way. This section does not affect pipeline operators' obligation to comply with other Federal laws addressing the operation of drones. This section would also codify that operators may use alternative methods of maintaining vegetation along pipeline rights-of-way by utilizing guidance issued by DOT or a relevant state agency, so long as they maintain an equal level of safety. In the absence of such guidance, operators may rely on industry best practices for such maintenance practices. Section 601 would prohibit PHMSA from operating or procuring drones from a "covered foreign country." Any drone PHMSA uses would have to be manufactured in the United States. This section would require PHMSA to submit a report to Congress generally addressing the status of its drone use and any changes it has made to its drone program to comply with the requirements of this section. The Senate bill was scheduled for a markup hearing on October 9 in the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, but that hearing was postponed.

Railroad Abandonment

In March 2025, a NSPS delegation visited with professional staff of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee as part of the NSPS Day on the Hill. Attendees included NSPS Past Presidents Bob Akins, of Ohio and Dr. Davey Edwards, of Texas, NSPS Directors Mike Zahner of Missouri and Joe Dolan of New Jersey, and NSPS Federal Lobbyist John "JB" Byrd. In January, NSPS hosted a zoom with representatives from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) to brainstorm on ways that they may be able to help find a solution to this issue.

Department of War
**** (Department of Defense renamed by Executive Order on September 5, 2025) ****

NDAA (NOTE: 2025 Day on the Hill Issue)

NSPS pursued a Workforce Development provision for the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by adding language to the House NDAA that would create a pilot program within the DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to spur certain categories and classifications of servicemen and women, with military experience in surveying, mapping and geospatial skills who are transitioning out of the military and into civilian life and careers and help them toward pursuing the surveying profession as the next step in their respective careers.

On September 8, the House Rules Committee considered an amendment (#348) to H.R. 3838 sponsored by Rep. Sheri Biggs (R-SC), and cosponsored by Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA), that would create a pilot in DoD TAP to help match these transitioning service members with professional opportunities in the surveying profession should they have some surveying skillsets or training as part of their military service. Unfortunately, the Biggs' amendment was not "made in order" for consideration and movement on the House floor.

WRDA

In January, President Biden signed into law S. 4367, the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA), or 2024 WRDA. Section 1123 authorizes USACE to carry out a national coastal mapping program, at \$15 million per year, to provide recurring national coastal mapping along the coasts of the United States to support USACE navigation, flood risk management, environmental restoration, and emergency operations missions.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Broadband Mapping

Many of the broadband inventory maps previously produced following an initiative in the Obama-era stimulus bill, known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, were found to be inaccurate. Complaints have been raised that many states expending ARRA funds, and the 2023 version of the National Broadband Map, failed to require supervision of the mapping by a licensed surveyor, were awarded to the low bidder rather than following qualifications based selection (QBS) laws, and/or were carried out by government agencies, universities, or firms that did not have experience or expertise in such commercial map production services. Miller/Wenhold is seeking an investigation by the FCC Inspector General.

NSPS is pursuing introduction of the Broadband Asset Surety Enhancement (BASE) Mapping Act, and inclusion of this bill as part of the 2025 Farm Bill.

Congressional GPS Caucus

In February 2021, Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ) joined Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE) as bipartisan co-chairs of House GPS Caucus to promote the benefits of GPS technology. The Caucus endeavors to educate Members of Congress and their staff on the societal benefits of GPS technology including support of economic growth, national security, and modernized infrastructure while advocating for the continuous availability, accuracy, reliability, and resiliency of the GPS constellation. The Senate GPS Caucus is co-chaired by Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Joni Ernst (R-IA). NSPS has been in contact with these Congressional offices to offer the help of the Surveying Profession to the goals of the Caucus, and specifically to help with the messaging and counterbalancing the Ligado policy advocacy on Capitol Hill.

As an affiliate member of the GPS Innovation Alliance (GPSIA), NSPS was involved in a forum and reception on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on November 14, 2023 celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Global Positioning System (GPS).

Ligado/LightSquared

NSPS is an active participant in coalitions seeking to prevent GPS spectrum interference. April 20, 2025 marked the fifth anniversary of the controversial approval of the Ligado order by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which studies show will likely cause harmful interference to GPS. NSPS opposed this action taken by the FCC and has repeatedly requested the FCC rescind and overturn or “stay” the order, including participating in a 2022 study by the National Academies of Science (NAS). In April 2025, NSPS joined 90 other organizations on a letter to President Trump and a letter to Congress, stating the groups "urge you to work with the FCC to address the harm from Ligado's proposed terrestrial network to critical GPS, satellite communications, and weather forecasting services by staying the order, addressing the previously unavailable information contained in the NAS report."

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Privacy

In February, Congressman Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Congressman John Joyce, M.D. (R-PA), Vice Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, announced the establishment of a comprehensive data privacy working group. In April, Miller/Wenhold provided a response to their request for information (RFI) for feedback from stakeholders on a framework on data privacy and security. In August, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd met with staff of Rep. Joyce to discuss this issue in more detail as the Committee moves closer to drafting new legislation this Congress.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB)/General Services Administration (GSA)/Small Business Administration (SBA)

Brooks Act/COFPAES/CIPC

NSPS is a member of the Council on Federal Procurement of Architectural and Engineering Services (COFPAES), a coalition of design societies that works to defend and promote the qualifications based selection (QBS) process enacted in the Brooks Act (40 U.S.C. 1101 et seq). COFPAES has also been successful in working with agencies that advertise procurement solicitations that violate the Brooks Act and getting those procurements compliant with QBS, particularly when errant solicitations are raised by NSPS members. The COFPAES intervention protects the identity of any firm or individual who brings the solicitation to its attention. On August 27, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd and NSPS Government Affairs Consultant John Palatiello participated in a COFPAES staff meeting with staff of the House Small Business Committee on expected Federal legislation and executive branch actions related to A&E (including surveying and mapping) procurement.

On September 30, COFPAES, of which NSPS is a member, submitted extensive comments and recommendations to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy/General Services Administration/Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Council for its Revolutionary FAR Overhaul (RFO) on revisions to FAR Part 36.6 and other sections of the FAR to strengthen and clarify the application and implementation of the Brooks Act’s qualifications based selection (QBS) process for architecture, engineering and related services, including surveying and mapping.

OMB Circular A-76

On September 10, NSPS Federal Lobbyist John “JB” Byrd, working through the Business Coalition for Fair Competition (BCFC), of which NSPS is a member, met next door to The White House, with policy staff of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on reforms to federal policy impacting government contracting and use of the private sector. NSPS also took the opportunity to highlight the “yellow pages test” bill introduced earlier this year by Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL). H.R. 1554, the "Freedom from Government Competition Act" (FFGCA), a bill long supported by NSPS. The bill establishes a process by which Federal agencies analyze their commercial activities (those for which private sector providers can be found in the Yellow Pages of the phone book) to determine whether government employees or private companies are the most efficient and economical

provider of such services, thereby lifting the moratorium on OMB Circular A-76. Miller/Wenhold is looking for a Senate sponsor of companion legislation.

Regulatory Reform

In January, President Trump issued policy requiring that whenever an agency promulgates a new rule, regulation, or guidance, it must identify at least 10 existing rules, regulations, or guidance documents to be repealed.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

In October 2024, the Biden administration announced that the SBA launched MySBA Certifications to simplify and streamline certifications for small business Federal contractors. MySBA Certifications is a one-stop-shop that allows small business owners to apply for multiple certifications with a single application, rather than submitting separate applications for the HUBZone, 8(a), Women Owned, and Veteran Owned Small Business Certification programs.

Size Standards and NAICS Codes

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. NAICS was developed under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and adopted in 1997 to replace the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. It was developed jointly by the U.S. Economic Classification Policy Committee (ECPC), Statistics Canada, and Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, to allow for a high level of comparability in business statistics among the North American countries.

On August 22, SBA published a proposed rule in the Federal Register proposing to revise monetary based size standards for businesses in various NAICS sectors. The proposed rule is part of the third 5-year rolling review of small business size standards, as required under the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (Public Law No. 111-240, sect. 1344, September 27, 2010). SBA proposed to increase 263 monetary based (259 receipts based and four assets based) industry size standards. SBA's proposed revisions relied on its recently revised "Size Standards Methodology." Public comments may be submitted on this proposed rule on or before October 21.

While not subject to the SBA proposed rule, per the Census, NAICS code 541370 represents Surveying and Mapping (except Geophysical) Services.

This industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in performing surveying and mapping services of the surface of the earth, including the sea floor. These services may include surveying and mapping of areas above or below the surface of the earth, such as the creation of view easements or segregating rights in parcels of land by creating underground utility easements.