The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
SD-512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The Digital Coast Partnership Advocacy Coalition requests your help in scheduling a hearing to markup S. 1069, the Digital Coast Act of 2019.

In September, the House Committee on Natural Resources unanimously adopted H.R. 2189, the Digital Coast Act, sponsored in a bipartisan nature by Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD) and Don Young (R-AK).

The Coalition also wishes to thank Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) for introducing S. 1069, the Senate Companion to H.R. 2189. 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.

We respectfully urge your action in scheduling S. 1069 for markup in 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.

Sincerely,

American Planning Association  
Association of State Floodplain Managers  
Coastal States Organization  
National Association of Counties  
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association  
National Flood Association  
National Society of Professional Surveyors  
National States Geographic Information Council  
The Nature Conservancy  
U.S. Geospatial Executives Organization

cc: Fellow Committee Members

10340 Democracy Lane, Suite 300  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030 -- (703) 787-6665