



August 9, 20106

Ms. Lolita Hall
State Director, Career and Technical Education
Virginia Department of Education
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
Lb.hall@doe.virginia.gov

Dear Ms. Hall:

The Virginia Association of Surveyors (VAS) is the statewide professional association of individuals in the field of land surveying. An affiliate of the National Society of Professional Surveyors, VAS promotes the profession of surveying in the Commonwealth, provides education to its members, and works to uphold the highest ethical standards among its members in the service of the public health, safety and welfare.

America is facing an impending crisis. The average age of a surveyor in the United States is 58. Surveyors are retiring and leaving the workforce faster than the new generation is entering. The number of individuals currently enrolled in 2-year or 4-year degree programs in surveying and related geospatial curricula, those sitting for state licensing examinations and those passing the examinations are at an unsustainable level. Moreover, colleges and universities are facing a critical shortage of American PhD instructors in surveying. Several universities that recently conducted searches for professors in the geospatial field had very few applicants and rarely are the applicants U.S. citizens or proficient in speaking English.

Surveying is a key part of the geospatial community, which is one of the high growth workforce sectors in the U.S. economy, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. However, the demand for workers in this area is far outpacing the supply.

Surveyors and other geospatial professionals play an important part in the U.S. economy. These professionals, and support technicians, make accurate measurements of the land, structures, and natural and man-made features, as well as determine property boundaries. The geospatial workforce provides data relevant to the size, shape, contour, gravitation, location, elevation, and dimension of land and features on or near the earth's surface for engineering, land use,

development, construction, environmental protection, resource management, defense, aerospace, law enforcement, public safety, homeland security, healthcare, public and private utilities, energy and other fossil and renewable resources development, IT and software/hardware development, internet tools, general business, banking, insurance, retail and marketing, as well as government agencies at all levels. Geospatial technologies now have a place in almost every market sector and industry.

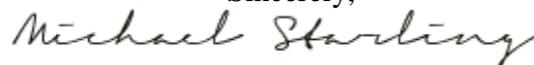
While surveying and geospatial jobs are high paying, high tech, and high quality - the type of jobs the Virginia economy must continue to create and maintain as the information society and knowledge-based economy evolve - there are not a sufficient number of younger Virginians entering the field.

Future economic growth, home ownership and other important Virginia and national priorities will be adversely impacted if a new generation of surveyors and geospatial professionals are not recruited to enter the workforce.

VAS urges the Virginia Career and Technical Education program to focus its attention on the surveying workforce. VAS would welcome the opportunity to enter into a partnership with your office, and local workforce entities, to develop effective recruiting strategies, create pathways to higher education and professional employment, and ensure there is adequate preparation in academia to staff university faculties and foster the continued development of 4-year degree programs.

Please let me know how VAS can work with your office to develop such a surveying and geospatial workforce development initiative. We look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Starling".

Michael Starling, LS
President

