



**AFFILIATE OF NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL SURVEYORS
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January 28, 2020

Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Suhas Subramanyam
Member, Virginia House of Delegates
Pocahontas Building, Room 424
900 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
DelSSubramanyam@house.virginia.gov

RE: House Bill 1003; Virginia Geographic Information Network; transfer of responsibilities to Virginia Department of Emergency Management

Dear Delegate Subramanyam:

The Virginia Association of Surveyors (VAS) wishes to express its concern over House Bill 1003, which proposes to move the Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) from the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM).

The Virginia Association of Surveyors represents more than 400 licensed professional land surveyors in Virginia. Our organization has worked closely with VGIN over the years. In fact, VAS has a seat on the VGIN Advisory Board, pursuant to § 2.2-2423 of the Code of Virginia.

As you may know, geographic information system (GIS) technology is used by numerous agencies of the Commonwealth, including those at the regional and local level, as well as many commercial stakeholders across a wide variety of industries and professions, for a multitude of purposes and applications. GIS technology is integral to the modern practice of surveying and includes significant data collected by land surveyors.

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Historically, VITA, as a technology agency, has taken a broad view of how various technologies and technological considerations under its jurisdiction affect a variety of end users and professions. In keeping with the mantra of “map it once, use it many times”, VITA has efficiently and effectively collected GIS data, and made such data publicly available, without bias toward any particular application. That has saved tax dollars and served a multitude of data users.

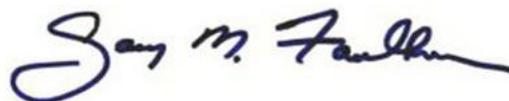
VAS is concerned that HB1003 will move VGIN to VDEM, an agency with a decidedly emergency management and Next Generation 911 focus, will narrow the focus of VGIN and create a bias in priorities and applications. We are concerned that considerations regarding GIS technology for other, non-emergency management purposes will become secondary. Notwithstanding the importance of emergency management applications, we do not believe housing VGIN in VDEM is in the best interest of Virginia government or the citizenry with regard to many other GIS data collection activities and applications, including transportation, climate change monitoring, economic development, environmental protection, and many others.

Moreover, it should be noted that very few other states pigeonhole their GIS agency and activities in a single agency. The current home for VGIN, in VITA as an applications-agnostic agency, is consistent with the management of GIS in most other states.

We respectfully request that as you proceed with HB1003, you bear in mind VAS’s concerns and you seek to have VGIN continuing to provide a broad, multiple purpose view of how GIS and other such technologies are used by many professionals across many platforms and for many public and private sector purposes and applications.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have questions or desire additional information about the Virginia Association of Surveyors and the practice of land surveying, you can reach me at 703.447.9366 or gfaulhaber@wilesmenschdc.com or John M. Palatiello, Executive Director, Virginia Association of Surveyors, at 844.414.1466 and at john@vasurveyors.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary M. Faulhaber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Gary M. Faulhaber, LS, RLS
President

cc: John M. Palatiello, Executive Director
Virginia Association of Surveyors