



Statement for the
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
May 23, 2017

H.R. 2199, Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform (FLAIR) Act

The National Society of Professional Surveyors ([NSPS](#)) is the national voice of land surveying professionals throughout the United States. Having incorporated the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) within NSPS in 2012, NSPS is the preeminent national professional society working in affiliation with the respective state societies of professional surveyors and along with persons trained, registered, or interested in the profession of surveying and mapping. NSPS advances the sciences and disciplines within the profession and strives to establish and further common interests, objectives, and political efforts to help bind the surveying profession into a unified body in the United States. NSPS is the interface for the surveying profession with a multitude of national organizations in related fields, and with federal government entities.

NSPS commends the leadership and bipartisan action taken by Representatives Kevin Cramer (R-ND) and Ron Kind (D-WI) for their bipartisan introduction of H.R. 2199, the Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform (FLAIR) Act of 2017.

This bill creates a single, federal multipurpose cadastre (a uniform Federal computer database), in accordance with standards recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. The bill also calls for an “inventory of inventories,” so that duplicate, wasteful activities can be identified and eliminated. The FLAIR Act will provide all agencies owning federal real property an improved accounting of their land assets. Such an inventory will assist in improved federal land management, resource conservation, environmental protection and utilization of real property, as well as identify property the federal government no longer needs to own.

The need to consolidate the plethora of stove-piped inventories into one, current, modern cadaster using geographic information systems (GIS) technology was demonstrated by then-Interior Secretary Gale Norton's 2005 testimony before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, when she said:

“The Department currently uses 26 different financial management systems and over 100 different property systems. Employees must enter procurement transactions multiple times in different systems so that the data are captured in real property inventories, financial systems, and acquisition systems. This fractured approach is both costly and burdensome to manage.”

It is estimated that the government wastes \$2 billion a year on some 77,000 unneeded buildings. As the Washington Post recently reported in 2014, a NPR story underestimates the problem, as the General Services Administration (GSA) inventory includes buildings only, and not land. The last official report on unneeded federal land (1997) indicated that the Bureau of Land Management alone is holding more than 3.4 million acres that had been identified for disposal through the agency's land use planning process. This has put GSA's management of Federal real property on the Government Accountability Office (GAO) "High Risk" list of activities most vulnerable to waste, fraud and abuse.

Since 1980, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has been calling for the development of a multipurpose cadastre, or land registry. In 2007, the NAS renewed this effort and recommended the idea of the FLAIR Act. This Federal effort helps state and local agencies verify their ongoing efforts to identify what each level of government owns and result in better land management.

The surveying profession would greatly benefit from a current, accurate inventory of Federal lands. Particularly in the Western states, public land survey system surveys would be more efficient. NSPS stands ready to help with the objectives of this important reform legislation, and strongly encourages Congress and the President enact H.R. 2199 into law.

National Society of Professional Surveyors
5119 Pegasus Court, Suite Q, Frederick, MD 21704
Phone: 240-439-4615 * Fax: 240-439-4952
www.nsps.us.com