



HOMELAND SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (HSIP) FREEDOM SUMMARY January 2009

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) developed the Homeland Security Infrastructure Program (HSIP). The HSIP is a clearinghouse of mission-critical geospatial and remote sensing foundation information required to increase readiness and knowledge about our Nation's critical infrastructure sectors, and to reduce response and recovery times in the event of a natural or terrorist-caused disaster within the United States.

The NGA, USGS, Department of Defense (OASD (HD&ASA)) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established a partnership to improve federal agency collaboration, joint-decision making regarding their Homeland Security and Homeland Defense missions, and to support continued joint data collection efforts to include the HSIP. The partnership recognizes the importance to continually improve the HSIP database and is leveraging multiple existing coordination mechanisms to accomplish HSIP objectives. These mechanisms include engaging the USGS State Geospatial Liaison network for statewide coordination efforts, the National States Geographic Information Council for coordination with State GIS coordinators, and the Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data Working Group (HIFLD) for HSIP data user feedback and coordination.

To date, the success of the HSIP has relied heavily on license-restricted commodity data to build and maintain the HSIP foundation. While the use of these sources has been expedient, it has also hampered our mission and the ability to share this data with the nation's emergency response personnel. The Government recognizes value in augmenting the HSIP with license-free data sets utilizing data already in the hands of other federal agencies, state and local authorities, and relevant non-government organizations. As a result, the HSIP Freedom Initiative was developed with a two-prong approach: first, it intends to make more of the national infrastructure databases available to a wider number of homeland security users, to include State and local partners and second, to help move the HSIP toward more license-free content.

The first initiative of the program involved analyzing all existing data layers included in the HSIP database to determine which layers could be distributed beyond the federal community and shared with the State/local homeland security community. The partnership technical evaluation determined approximately 190 current layers were license-free and consistent with Federal, State and Local government access and use constraints. These layers have been posted on the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) GIS Community of Interest. Access will be granted to the portal for all federal, state and local Homeland Security mission partners. They will have the ability to download the consolidated HSIP Freedom data set to use them in their state or local emergency preparedness or response efforts, where previously these were not available until a declared emergency. This portal is due to be operational in mid-January, 2009.

The secondary objective of HSIP Freedom is already successfully underway. Through a trusted contractor to the NGA, data has been gathered from states across the country, harmonized and aligned into a seamless national data set. Seven layers are being worked upon at present, with the enhanced data being returned to the states. By substituting costly licensed data sets with state information provided free of charge, the government saves taxpayer dollars, and the states receive improved data at no additional cost to them. This program is planned to continue in the future with more layers being developed in cooperation with the states.

In summary, the HSIP Freedom program, which began a little over a year ago as a logical outgrowth of the overall HSIP concept, has now matured into a functional program which promises to provide more useful infrastructure data to a far greater number of Homeland Security customers and in a timelier fashion than ever before. Thanks to the cooperation of various agencies at all levels of government the HSIP Freedom vision and direction has become a significant information sharing program that will continue to expand and grow into the future.