A RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the VGIN Advisory Board that imagery and geospatial data is essential to commercial and governmental activities, the collection, storage and use of which, including through the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) can and should be permitted and encouraged for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Whereas the geospatial field is a $73 billion market that drives more than $1 trillion in economic activity;

Whereas more than 500,000 American jobs are related to the collection, storage and dissemination of imagery and geospatial data, and another 5.3 million workers utilize such data;

Whereas Virginia has one of the highest concentrations of geospatial firms and organizations of any of any jurisdiction in the world and in the United States;

Whereas as much as 90 percent of government information has a geospatial information component and up to 80 percent of the information managed by business is connected to a specific location;

Whereas geospatial technology has been identified by the Department of Labor as one of just fourteen high growth sectors of the United States workforce projected to add substantial numbers of new jobs to the economy or affect the growth of other industries or where there are existing or emerging businesses being transformed by technology and innovation requiring new skills sets for workers to prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high-growth, high-demand, and economically vital sectors of the American economy;

Whereas, through the Virginia Geographic Information Network, the Commonwealth of Virginia has embarked on a program to collect, disseminate, share, utilize and apply imagery and geospatial data for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is essential to E911 emergency response and dispatching of police personnel, fire trucks, emergency medical technicians, and ambulances;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is utilized in precision agriculture to assist farmers with maximizing crop yields, minimizing non-source point pollution into Virginia's bays, lakes, streams, rivers and waterways;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is the underpinning for topographic mapping used in hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing and other recreational activities;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is used for management of storm-water runoff and mapping of impervious surfaces, flood plain mapping, and equitable assessment of local property taxes levied and collected by municipalities;

Whereas geospatial imagery and data is used in a variety of routine applications by all levels of government on a daily basis, such as mapping to provide for zoning and comprehensive planning; efficient routing of trash collection trucks; safe, energy-efficient, and time-saving routing of school buses;

Whereas the timely acquisition of geospatial imagery and data is critical to assessment, real-time decision making, and mitigation during and immediately following both natural and anthropogenic disasters, including earthquakes, tornados, blizzards, floods, hurricanes, wildfires, infrastructure disasters including collapsed buildings, bridges and dams, ruptured pipelines, and various types of terrorist incidents; and in emergency "blue tarp" surveys to support post-disaster response;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is the foundation to engineering design and construction of a wide range of infrastructure improvements, including roads, water, electric, fiber-optic and other utilities;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is routinely integrated into GPS and navigation systems, on-board vehicles and handheld devices that are so popular among consumers today;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is essential to the Census and to establishment of electoral districts for municipal, state legislative, or Congressional representation;

Whereas the General Assembly and government agencies are increasingly reliant upon imagery and geospatial data for the management of natural resources, economic development, the management, adjudication, and prevention of future disruptions in the home mortgage system, the development and implementation of a smart energy grid, the deployment of universal domestic broadband service, the management of state and local government real property assets, emergency preparedness and response, homeland security, the delivery of efficient health care and other services provided, financed, or regulated by the Commonwealth, measuring, monitoring, verifying and validating the effects of climatic and environmental phenomena, and the maintenance, rehabilitation, and enhancement of public works, transportation, and other infrastructure of the United States;

Whereas universities, colleges and other institutions of higher education provide education and research in geospatial sciences to improve the understanding, creation, analysis and use of geospatial data that promotes a skilled workforce development in geospatial technologies and application;

Whereas geospatial data is derived from images and data collected from a variety of airborne and spaceborne platforms, as well as other mobile/terrestrial-based acquisition systems;

Whereas imagery and geospatial data from unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) provides a tremendous opportunity to enhance the efficiency and economy of the collection, dissemination, utilization and application of such data;

Whereas the Commonwealth of Virginia and Virginia Tech are participants in the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership, designated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as an unmanned aerial system (UAS) test site to conduct research vital to integrate unmanned aircraft into the nation's airspace;

Whereas among the first private companies awarded a regulatory exemption for commercial (UAS) operations by the FAA for imagery and geospatial data collection is a firm with a significant presence in Virginia;

Whereas aerial photography, land surveying and mapping are among the leading applications for the use of UAS in the FAA's Integration of Civil Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in the National Airspace System (NAS) "Roadmap";

Whereas the FAA has issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) for safe integration of commercial UAS in the NAS; and

Whereas imagery and geospatial data is regularly and historically collected, utilized and applied by companies engaged in the free market commerce of the United States and by government authorities operating within the safeguards, rights and framework established by the Fourth and Fourteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) Advisory Board that imagery and geospatial data collection, usage and application is a valued part of the modern American economy, as it is broadly applied to improve the analyses and decisions necessary to sustain and enhance the quality of life, and, when carried out ethically and in a fashion that complies with all appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks, does not threaten the privacy of individual citizens, and that its collection utilizing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) should not be subject to legislative limitation or restriction in the Commonwealth of Virginia.