

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WM. LACY CLAY  
AT THE HEARING ON THE  
ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE  
GEOSPATIAL ONE STOP**

**June 10, 2003**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and I thank all of the witnesses for taking the time to work with us today.

This is a very complicated topic, and it doesn't take very long for the discussion to move into the world of technical jargon to a point where the public is left behind. It doesn't have to be that way, and I hope we can hold this public hearing at a level that is accessible to the public.

In fact, the issues that we are addressing today are issues of basic government oversight. The administration has proposed a project that will simplify access to government geospatial information. The administration will describe to us that project and its goals.

In addition, we will examine the breadth of funding for geographic information across the federal government. Two months ago, I asked the Congressional Research Service to assess for me the extent of funding for geographic information systems across the federal government. In the process of fulfilling that request, we learned that many agencies had a difficult time providing

the necessary information. Some, simply ignored the request, and others claimed that they couldn't make sense of their own information. Let me give you just one example. The Federal Emergency Management Administration recently issued a proposal to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on geographic information. At the same time, FEMA could not tell CRS how much would be spend by the agency on geographic information in 2003. If they don't know what they are spending this year, how can they be trusted with a procurement of that size? I hope the witness on our second panel will address this problem.

Our second panel will bring to the table some of the perspectives from the private sector. Much of what is being done to bring geographic information to the market place is being build by these companies. We have all seen adds for General Motor's On-Star and used MapQuest to find an address. Behind these applications are a wealth of geographic information, and elaborate systems of software. This panel can advise us on how the government can build upon what has already been done by the private sector without reinventing the wheel.

I hope that today we will learn how much is being spent across the government on geographic information systems; whether or not there is duplicate spending; and what is being done about it. I hope that we will learn how much of what the government is doing has already been done by the private sector. And I hope that we will learn what can be done to make this endeavor more efficient. If

we don't learn these things today, I expect the chairman will call another hearing.

Again, I thank the witnesses for their efforts, and I ask that the full text of my remarks be included in the record.