



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Geographic Information Council

c/o Geospatial Enterprise Office

530 Airport Road SE

Salem, OR 97301

December 13, 2022

To: Dr. David Applegate, Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Tom Rohlifing, Chair, Oregon Geographic Information Council

Subject: Concerns about changes to USGS hydrography program

I am writing to communicate the impacts of the U.S Geological Survey's (USGS's) recent decision to discontinue its stewardship support for the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) and Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD) and shift those resources towards the 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP). Since the adoption of the NHD and WBD as the State of Oregon's hydrography standard, our agencies have collaboratively developed hydrography products which collectively support the missions of tribal, state, and local governments in Oregon.

The Oregon Geographic Information Council (OGIC) is composed of representatives from tribes, federal, state, and local agencies, universities, and private and non-profit entities that are appointed by the Governor. Its mission is to provide statewide governance for sharing, coordinating, and managing geospatial Framework data among public bodies and the citizens of Oregon. The Council deliberates and approves resources and standards for shared geospatial Framework data and geospatial technology development, to prevent duplication and save taxpayer dollars. Cessation of support for the NHD and WBD before the 3DHP model is finalized, available, and fully supported undermines the effectiveness of Oregon's hydrography standard.

Stewardship of the NHD and WBD is very active in Oregon and multiple stakeholders are involved. The centralized management of the data with common editing and linear referencing tools that USGS provides is key to the success of the standard. With the anticipated gap in editing capability during the NHD/WBD – 3DHP transition, we have significant concerns about the management of these data during this time. There is a need for uninterrupted editing capability to avoid the proliferation of divergent hydrography datasets.

We are concerned this decision will have adverse effects on our ongoing work with these datasets and on mission-critical activities across the state, including the identification of fish habitat for multiple regulatory purposes, fish passage barrier prioritization, water quality



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monitoring, and salmon habitat restoration. Other state, county, and local applications of the NHD to support specific business needs will likely be affected as well.

With the announced end of support coming in March 2023 there isn't sufficient time to respond to the USGS's announcement and build alternate systems for managing hydrography. We request that the USGS continue providing support for editing transactions on NHD and WBD until a new 3DHP system is fully developed and processes are in place for stewardship.

Sincerely,

Tom Rohlifing

Chair, Oregon Geographic Information Council

CC:

Dr. Jill Rolland, USGS Regional Director, Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands Regions

OGIC Members

Robert Harmon, Hydrography Framework Implementation Team Leader