



Testimony in support of funding for re-monumentation of the Public Land Survey System across Minnesota



Geoffrey Maas AICP GISP
Senior Geospatial Business Analyst, Ramsey County Information Services
Affiliate Faculty, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

To the Chair, and the members of the Committee, my name is Geoffrey Maas, I am the Senior Geospatial Business Analyst for Ramsey County Information Services as well as an Affiliate Faculty member of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. I am here to testify in favor of SF 1659 (contained within SF 1426) for funding to be directed to the re-monumentation of the Public Land Survey System in our state. The funding as proposed will support the maintenance of an important—yet often forgotten—form of infrastructure that undergirds and defines significant aspects of our society, our relationship to, and use of land, and to our statewide economy.

In my profession—that of urban planning and working with geographic information systems—we deal extensively with geospatial digital data that represents parcels of real estate, roadways, land use designations, zoning districts, administrative boundaries, and other features of the both the built and natural environment.

The digital data that we create and maintain to conduct the work of government traces its origin to—and is dependent upon—the accuracy of the statewide grid of monuments the proposal at hand is intended to refresh and to maintain.

Accurate data and measurements of land boundaries supported by a well-maintained Public Land Survey System underly and serve a wide range of activities including real estate transactions, adjudication of property boundary disputes, natural resource management, land value assessment, property tax collection, maintenance of easements and rights of way to name just a few. Having a well maintained and dependable grid of monumentation of this kind ensures the creation and maintenance of the accurate digital data needed for natural resource protection, secure and accurate real estate transactions, accuracy (and clarity) for legal activity related to land and supports the continued provision of land available for development, for forestry, for agriculture, for recreation and all other public and private activity which rely upon the system.

The proposed investment by the state to provide for the Public Land Survey System re-monumentation will extend its lifespan and be of enormous continuous value to the body of public and private professionals who rely upon it. In providing this funding, Minnesota can—as it so often does—set an example for other states in maintaining this type of infrastructure for the benefit of its current and future generations. On behalf of the urban planning and geospatial professional community in our state who work closely with our colleagues in the professional survey community, I reiterate my support for the funding proposed and the good work that it can do.

I am grateful for your consideration and hopeful for the support of the Committee. Thank you.