H. R. 6475

To authorize the Secretary of Commerce, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a constituent-driven program that collects priority coastal geospatial data and supports an information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision support tools, training, and best practices to inform and improve local, State, regional, and Federal capacities to manage the coastal region.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

September 20, 2012

Mr. Ruppersberger (for himself and Mr. Young of Alaska) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Commerce, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a constituent-driven program that collects priority coastal geospatial data and supports an information platform capable of efficiently integrating coastal data with decision support tools, training, and best practices to inform and improve local, State, regional, and Federal capacities to manage the coastal region.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-

tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Digital Coast Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) the lack of current, accurate, uniform, and standards-based geospatial information to characterize the United States coastal region presents a significant liability to adequately manage and maintain the Nation’s—

(A) environment;

(B) infrastructure;

(C) economy; and

(D) public safety and homeland security;

(2) more than half of all people of the United States (153 million) currently live on or near a coast and an additional 12 million are expected in the next decade;

(3) coastal counties in the United States average 300 persons per square mile, compared with the national average of 98;

(4) on a typical day, more than 1,540 permits for construction of single-family homes are issued in coastal counties, combined with other commercial, retail, and institutional construction to support this population;
(5) over half of the Nation’s economic productivity is located within coastal regions;

(6) highly accurate, high-resolution remote sensing and other geospatial data play an important role in management of the coastal zone and economy, including for flood and coastal storm surge prediction; hazard risk and vulnerability assessment; emergency response and recovery planning; community resilience to longer range climate change impacts; permitting and zoning decisionmaking; habitat and ecosystem health assessments; and landscape change detection; and

(7) the Digital Coast is a model approach in effective Federal partnerships with local and State government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term “Digital Coast” means a constituent-driven effort led by the Secretary to provide an enabling platform that integrates geospatial data, decision support tools, training, and best practices to address coastal and emergency management issues and needs. The Digital Coast strives to sustain and enhance coastal economies and ecosystem services by
helping communities address their issues, needs, and challenges through cost-effective and participatory solutions.

(2) The term “remote sensing and other geospatial” means collecting, storing, retrieving, or disseminating graphical or digital data depicting natural or manmade physical features, phenomena, or boundaries of the Earth and any information related thereto, including surveys, maps, charts, satellite and airborne remote sensing data, images, lidar, and services performed by professionals such as surveyors, photogrammetrists, hydrographers, geodesists, cartographers, and other such services.

(3) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(4) The term “State”—

(A) means a State of the United States in, or bordering on, the Atlantic, Pacific, or Arctic Ocean, the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, Long Island Sound, or one or more of the Great Lakes; and

(B) includes Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, the Common-
wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the
Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, American Samoa, and any portion of a State that is located within 100 kilometers of the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, or the Great Lakes.

(5) The term “coastal region” means the area of United States waters extending inland from the shoreline to include coastal watersheds and seaward to the territorial sea.

(6) The term “Federal Geographic Data Committee” means the interagency committee that promotes the coordinated development, use, sharing, and dissemination of geospatial data on a national basis.

SEC. 4. BUILDING THE DIGITAL COAST.

(a) Establishment and Implementation.—

(1) In general.—The Secretary shall establish and implement the Digital Coast to collect the following priority supporting data and integrate such data with other available data for the benefit of the broadest measure of coastal resource management constituents and applications:

(A) Coastal elevation data.

(B) Land use and land cover data.
(C) Benthic habitat and submerged aquatic vegetation data.

(D) Parcels data.

(E) Planimetric data.

(F) Socioeconomic and human use data.

(2) FOCUS ON FILLING NEEDS AND GAPS.—In implementing this section, the Secretary shall—

(A) recognize that remote sensing and other geospatial data acquisition for navigational and positioning purposes is carried out through other authorities and programs; and

(B) focus on filling data needs and gaps for critical coastal management issues.

(b) DATA INTEGRATION, TOOL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, DOCUMENTATION, DISSEMINATION, AND ARCHIVE.—The Secretary shall—

(1) make data and resulting integrated products developed under this section readily accessible via the Digital Coast and other related Internet technologies;

(2) develop decision support tools that use and display resulting integrated data and provide training on use of such tools;

(3) document such data to Federal Geographic Data Committee standards; and
(4) archive all raw data acquired under this Act at the appropriate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data center or other appropriate Federal data center.

(c) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall coordinate the activities carried out pursuant to this Act to maximize data sharing and integration and minimize duplication by—

(1) coordinating activities, when appropriate, with—


(B) coastal States and United States territories;

(C) local governments; and

(D) representatives of nongovernmental entities;

(2) participating, pursuant to section 216 of Public Law 107–347 (44 U.S.C. 3501 note), in the establishment of such standards and common proto-
cols as are necessary to assure the interoperability
of remote sensing and other geospatial data with all
users of such information within—

(A) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration;

(B) other Federal agencies;

(C) State and local government; and

(D) the private sector;

(3) coordinating with, seeking assistance and
cooperation of, and providing liaison to the Federal
Geographic Data Committee pursuant to Office of
Management and Budget Circular A–16 and Execu-
tive Order No. 12906; and

(4) providing for the utilization of contracts
with the private sector, to the maximum extent prac-
ticable, to provide such products and services as are
necessary to collect remote sensing and other
geospatial data; which contracts shall be considered
“surveying and mapping” services as such term is
used and as such contracts are awarded at the dis-
cretion of the Secretary in accordance with the selec-
tion procedures in chapter 11 of title 40, United
States Code.
SEC. 5. COASTAL SERVICES CENTERS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish, within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Coastal Services Centers to facilitate the development of products and services that address the needs of local, State, and regional entities involved with coastal and ocean decisionmaking including those State coastal management and research reserves benefitting from this Act, and to lead development and maintenance of the Digital Coast.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Coastal Services Centers shall be to—

(1) support the environmental, social, and economic well-being of the coast by linking people, information, and technology;

(2) identify and assess coastal and ocean management needs and increase the capabilities and capacities of managers to address them at the local, State, and regional levels;

(3) manage the Digital Coast program to carry out the intent of this Act;

(4) convene and engage coastal managers and decisionmakers in dialog concerning coastal issues and share information and best practices across this audience; and
(5) collaborate with various programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, other Federal agencies, and nongovernmental entities to bring data, information, services, and tools to the Nation’s coastal and ocean decisionmakers.

(c) Financial Agreements.—To carry out this Act, including to provide program support to non-Federal entities that participate in implementing this Act, the Secretary—

(1) may enter into financial agreements including grants, cooperative agreements, interagency agreements, and contracts with other Federal, tribal, State, and local governmental and nongovernmental entities; and

(2) may collect registration fees in support of training, workshops, and conferences that advance the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary $85,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2018 to carry out this Act.