

POLICY STATEMENTS FOR FEDERAL GEOGRAPHIC DATA SHARING¹

The overall purpose of these policy statements is to facilitate full and open access to Federal geographic data by Federal users and the general public. They were prepared in consonance with the goals of the Federal Geographic Data Committee, Office of Management and Budget Circular A-16, the Data Management for Global Change Research Policy Statements, and the proposed revision of Office and Management and Budget Circular A-130. As such, they represent the U.S. Government's position on access to Federal geographic data.

Geographic data that are created, collected, processed, disseminated, and stored by the Federal Government are a valuable national resource. The Federal Government serves as a steward of this resource, shall exercise information resource management with special emphasis on the information life cycle, and shall ensure the effective and economical development of the Nation's spatial data infrastructure.

- Agencies shall commit to the maintenance, validation, description, accessibility, and distribution of geographic data.
- Agencies shall manage geographic data in a way that facilitates data sharing and use by other agencies and the general public. Geographic data shall be maintained consistently among agencies. Data sharing maximizes the net return on the investment of public resources.
- Federal program managers are data managers and have a responsibility to plan for information resource management as an integral part of overall mission planning. Agencies need to plan from the outset for the steps in the information life cycle.
- Federal, national, and international standards shall be used to the greatest extent possible for data content, processing, and dissemination of geographic data sets.
- Agencies shall disseminate geographic data in a manner that achieves the best balance among the goals of maximizing the usefulness of the data and minimizing the cost to the government and the public. Data products should be disseminated equitably and on timely and equal terms. Agencies should take advantage of all dissemination channels, Federal and non-Federal, including State and local governments and private sector entities, in discharging agency data dissemination responsibilities.
- Agencies should set use charges for data products at a level sufficient to recover the cost of dissemination but no higher. They also exclude from the calculation of the charges costs associated with the original collection and processing of the data. Exceptions to this policy are described in section 8a(8)(c) of the April 29, 1992, Federal Register Notice to revise OMB Circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources."
- Federal agencies shall maintain an information dissemination management system for geographic data that shall include easily accessible information and the data holdings, including quality assessments, supporting information, and guidance and aids for locating and obtaining the data.
- For those programs in which selected principal investigators have initial periods of exclusive data use, the data shall be made openly available as soon as the exclusive use period has expired. In each case, the funding agency shall explicitly define the duration of any exclusive use period.

¹Policy statements adopted by the Federal Geographic Data Committee in June 1992.