

Samuel C.V.D. Kilbourn, Esquire
Chair, Real Estate Section
Maine State Bar Association
584 Main Street
South Portland, ME 04106

**RE: Maine Library of Geographic Information- Developments of interest to the
Maine Bar Real Estate Section**

Dear Mr. Kilbourn:

I am a Member of the Board of the Maine Library of Geographic Information ("Geolibrary"), representing real estate and development interests. (See, 5 M.R.S.A. § 2001 *et seq.*) Board membership is broadly representative of various public and private stakeholders. The Geolibrary works closely with the Maine Office of Information Technology and the Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems ("MEGIS"). Maine Bar members regularly benefit from this collaboration, which makes significant public geographic information available on the internet.

The Geolibrary and MEGIS are working to help the State develop geographic information system ("GIS") capabilities to promote efficient government administration and land use planning. This effort has important implications for the Real Estate Bar. Once implemented, a GIS-based integrated land records information system would facilitate access to a variety of information about a particular parcel and adjoining lands. Title examiners, planners, and developers could see a parcel on an aerial photograph (map quality orthoimagery is the desired standard), and access information about land cover, roads, protected lands, soils, wetlands, aquifers and geology. The current GIS project is a first step towards this vision, and Bar involvement will ensure that the system delivers the services its members and their clients need. We also think Bar participation in the current planning process would promote wider use of GIS in Maine.

Particularly relevant to the Bar are the Geolibrary and MEGIS efforts to address the persistent problem of the split between the counties, municipalities, and the State in the maintenance of land records. The May 2006 GIS Needs Assessment & Requirements Analysis for Maine County Government commissioned by the Geolibrary (http://www.maine.gov/geolib/MECo_Report_Final.pdf) recommended that the registries of deeds integrate their data management with constituent towns.

Adding parcel identification numbers to deeds was among the Needs Assessment's suggestions. Although some registry indexing systems may already be capable of adding a parcel identification number field, the adoption of such a procedure requires legal review to help adopt the best planning strategies, and to address the implications of such changes for title examiners.

This is a propitious time for Bar involvement in the development of GIS in Maine. The Geolibrary has recently been awarded a \$50,000 grant by The Federal Geographic Data Committee ("FGDC") which promotes the coordinated development and dissemination of national geospatial data. The grant monies are part of FGDC's Fifty States Initiative and will be supplemented by contributions from the Geolibrary and MEGIS. (<http://www.fgdc.gov/policyandplanning/50states>)

The Geolibrary is in the process of issuing a Request for Proposals in order to select a contractor to provide planning services pursuant to the FGDC grant. We hope to work with a contractor to achieve these two planning goals:

- 1) Updating and enhancing the Geolibrary Strategic Plan, bringing it into alignment with the goals of the Fifty States Initiative.
- 2) Recommending a framework and specification for an integrated land records information system for the State of Maine.

The Geolibrary Board is inviting Maine Bar Real Estate and Title Section participation in this process, particularly with respect to the development of an integrated land records system. As a member of the Bar, I think the Section's participation is essential to planning Maine's use of GIS to achieve broad social and economic goals. I would be pleased to discuss this further with you, and hope that you or other members of the Section will be able to collaborate with the Geolibrary and MEGIS in their efforts. I am sure we can arrange to provide the Bar more information and a better introduction to ongoing GIS efforts in Maine, and would also be pleased to work with you in that regard.

Very truly yours,