

NGS POLICY 02-2006



Policy on Units of Measure

for the State Plane Coordinate System of '83

National Geodetic Survey

Approved by the Executive Steering Committee

01 February 2006

I. Background Information on State Plane Coordinate Systems

In 1991, the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) adopted a policy that defines the conditions under which the North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83), State Plane Coordinates (SPC) may be published in feet in addition to meters. As outlined in that policy, each state or territory must adopt NAD 83 legislation (typically referenced as Codes, Laws or Statutes), which specifically defines a conversion to either the U.S. Survey Foot or the International Foot. That policy was drafted, in part to encourage states and territories to enact legislation to adopt NAD 83 as their official reference system and to legitimize a specific foot conversion for all spatial data users in their communities. To date, 48 states have adopted the appropriate legislation. However, for various reasons, only 14 have completed the requirements outlined in the 1991 policy for publication of SPCs in feet. This lack of uniformity has led to confusion and misuse of SPCs as provided in various NGS products, services, and tools. In an effort to enhance the quality of this significant part of the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) the following procedures are provided as a replacement for the 1991 policy.

II. Policy Update

1. If a state or territory has not enacted NAD 83 legislation, NGS will publish metric SPCs units only; but will continue to provide technical assistance to individuals, agencies, and organizations interested in completing this effort.
2. If a state or territory has enacted NAD 83 legislation which specifically defines the conversion factor, for either the U.S. Survey Foot or the International Foot, NGS will automatically publish NAD 83 SPCs in both meters and the specified feet for that state or territory.
3. If a state or territory has enacted NAD 83 legislation without specifically defining the conversion factor for feet, NGS will (following a review by the NGS Director) publish foot values, if the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - A. An interested person, governmental agency or professional organization in the state/territory makes a request to publish a specific foot to the NGS Director.
 - B. The NGS Director assigns a technical coordinator to assist the requestor, to ensure appropriate state or territorial surveying, mapping and GIS agencies and organizations are contacted and are in consensus. These

may include, but not be limited to:

1. Land Surveying Professional Association
2. Transportation Department
3. Office of Geographic Information
4. GIS professional association or consortium

C. An official written request, is made to the NGS Director, signed by senior representative of the requesting agencies and organizations as approved by the technical coordinator.

D. The technical coordinator drafts and publishes a Federal Register Notice (FRN) outlining the state or territory's intent to publish SPCs in a specific foot. If no irresolvable comments are received within 30 days after the FRN publication, the technical coordinator will work with various NGS divisions (responsible for SPC publication) to ensure the conversion is implemented into appropriate NSRS products, services and tools.