

Federal Trade Commission

RE: "Protecting Consumer Privacy in an Era of Rapid Change: A Proposed Framework for Businesses and Policymakers" Comments from a Small Business

To FTC:

I respectfully urge the FTC not to implement any enforcement or broad regulation that would have a harmful affect on firms like CompassData in the Geospatial and GPS mapping as survey business. We provide GPS product and professional services for industry and government to build precise GIS systems. Specifically, the FTC report imprecisely uses and regulates the term "precise geolocation information" or "precise geolocation data". This would adversely impact consumers, geospatial firms, and government programs.

My firm is particularly concerned that this term was not defined in the FTC staff report and the proposed regulations will have broad and harmful unintended consequences on our business of surveying and mapping locations on the earth with GPS and optical technology.

The use of the term "geolocation" or other geospatial relevant terminology that appears in the FTC regulations will impose a significant new liability on my firm. It regulates areas of the economy and geospatial activities that have not been identified as a problem or pose any privacy concern to citizens. The regulations could thwart common, legitimate, and emerging uses of geospatial data for utilities, emergency response/post disaster remediation, insurance, environmental protection, E-911 mapping, flood mapping, energy, property security, navigation, monitoring/early warning systems, and others.

Moreover, activities, technologies, and applications development could be deemed illegal. For example, it would be impractical, if not impossible, for my clients to obtain prior approval or consent from individual citizens prior to acquiring or applying data such as GPS survey, optical survey, satellite imagery, aerial photography, or parcel, address, agriculture, or transportation data. The FTC regulation would effectively ban our clients from important value added integration and application activities that improve the accuracy of their Geospatial data sets that enable them to make informed decisions.

Finally, any such FTC regulation could put U.S. companies at a significant and insurmountable competitive disadvantage against foreign firms that may not be covered by that regulation, or for which enforcement would be impractical. These regulations could potentially roll back the clock on the advantages GPS and GIS technology give businesses and government operations to improve efficiency, safety, and customer service. As a small women owned business we have been supporting our clients to providing these professional services and products for 16 years. These regulations could put us out of business and put our staff out of work.

FTC should provide the necessary and desirable privacy protections to individual citizens; however, it should not limit the use of GPS and GIS technology to grow, prosper, and bring to

the market those applications that meet the economic demands of consumers and citizens. We have many regulations in place today that provide consumer protection for the use of GPS and GIS data for our clients. We have licensed professionals on staff that are bound by a code of conduct as well as regulations.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this regulation. Contact us if you have questions about how this process will affect our business.

Regards,

W. Brant Howard
Founder and CEO
CompassData, Inc.