



# Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors

Affiliated with the National Society of Professional Surveyors



To: Senate Economic Development Committee  
From: Francis Thousand  
CC: Board of Directors  
Date: January 6, 2010  
Re: AB 271

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Public Hearing

Thank you Senator Lassa and Committee Members for holding this hearing and giving me an opportunity to speak in support of Substitute Amendment 1 to AB 271.

My name is Francis Thousand. I'm the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors and most importantly I am a land surveyor. I have been licensed by the state to serve the public since 1976.

As a practicing land surveyor I am familiar with the current definition in the statutes and the reality of what the public needs from Professional Land Surveyors. This bill is basically a licensing bill. The definition of the practice includes areas that the public is currently demanding from Professional Land Surveyors. The bill refines and narrows the legal definition of land surveying. It is not an expansion. When the current definition was created, condominiums like the Fred Risser Law Center were not being created. Monona Terrace, sitting on a lake bed, with its

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state owned parking above a public street and rail corridor with City of Madison utility connections passing through it and topped off with a bridge easement from the Hilton Hotel to the Convention Center, was not the typical development. Block 89 is surrounded by E. Main, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, E. Doty and S. Pinckney. There is public parking below ground with above ground entrances and vents. There are air-rights easements to protect views from the adjacent buildings and a service core that serves all the buildings in the block. The glass and stone architectural features project into the public right-of-way. The developer is paying a fee to the City based on the area of the glass and stone encroachment. The Professional Land Surveyor is involved in measuring, mapping and describing the separate interests in all these projects. This not an expansion of the definition but a modernizing of the definition.

We still are a paper document driven society. Professional Land Surveying is no different. From the time of the first government surveys in the 1830s to the present, the most common way to display survey information is a map. A map is a cartographic representation of research, measurements and monuments found or set of any tract of land. It is not something new. You can see the plats from the original surveys at the Bureau of Commissions of Public Lands office. Wisconsin law has statute provisions for a number of types of maps. The statutes are explicit right down to the sheet size and color of the ink. But not every survey falls into one of the documents controlled by statute. The surveys that don't fall

under the specifics of a state statute are as important to people that need them. Aerial mapping works great for flood plain mapping but if you want to know if the water is going to flood your basement you need someone a little closer to the ground. You can map transportation corridors using photogrammetry but if you want to know the impact of the right-of-way line on your septic system you need to be on the ground. All these types of mapping fall under Cartographic surveying. But with the exemptions in Section 89 of the bill only the maps that also include the items listed under Section 65 must be prepared by a Professional Land Surveyor. The bill clearly states in Section 65 that the maps that you need a license to create are "for the purpose of establishing the boundaries of any interest in real property indentified is sub 1". Google maps, weather maps, highway maps, GIS maps, maps created from areal photography and a variety of other maps all may depict boundaries but do not establish those boundaries and are not included in the definition and are further exempted in Section 89. The Professional Land Surveyor have the education and experience in map making or Cartographic Survey if he is ever going to explain the results of his survey to the public. None of these other map makers owe a duty to the public except for the Professional Land Surveyor by virtue of licensing.

To sum up, this bill does not expand the definition but includes those services that the public needs. This bill will not prevent anyone who is doing mapping from continuing to do mapping. This bill does protect the

public and the public's interest in orderly boundaries. Sloppy boundaries just fills up the court calendars.

Professional Land Surveyors sign, seal and certify all their maps. This bill talks about placing disclaimers on some other map products. The Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors thinks it is a good idea to alert the public as to the quality of the map but would not be opposed to some modifications to that part of the bill.

I support this bill and ask you to do the same. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.