Use of Third Party Mapping Tools in State Government

Prepared by Patrick Gebhardt, Department of Natural Resources, (360) 902-1490, Patrick.Gebhardt@dnr.wa.gov

Presenter
Patrick Gebhardt, Department of Natural Resources

Purpose of Appearance
Provide an overview of issues related to licensing and standards for the use of third party map visualization products such as Google Earth, Google Maps, and Microsoft Virtual Earth within the state government environment.

Status
This is the first time this issue has been brought before the committee.

Background
Use of products like Google Earth, Google Maps, and MS Virtual Earth can be very useful within state government. However, there are differences between the various products and the language contained in the various licensing agreements is very difficult to decipher. These products can be easily downloaded by staff and there are undoubtedly many copies being used by staff within the state. It is essential that the state develop a policy and possibly standards concerning the use of these types of products. Until this is accomplished the state will be at risk of lawsuits from vendors of these products should it be discovered we are violating published license agreements.

Issues/Actions
Many staff in the state government have downloaded various third party map visualization products without considering the technical, license, and legal implications to the state of having done so.

Next Steps
Decide whether the Committee wishes to address the various third party map visualization products on the market, recommend a standard for state use, and engage the Attorney General's office in determining how to legally use such products.

Previous Appearances Before the Committee
None.