



Fostering Excellence in GIS

[www.URISA.org](http://www.URISA.org)

May 1, 2018

Dear URISA Alabama Chapter Board,

We appreciate you taking the time to communicate your concerns about OneURISA and the recent financial analysis to the Chapter Advisory Board and URISA Board of Directors. First, we do want to apologize for the time it has taken to respond to your concerns. Hopefully you have been aware that Teresa Townsend, URISA President, experienced an unexpected death in her family. This has delayed our response.

OneURISA represents the greatest realignment of our organization in its over 50-year history. Which is why it has taken over 15 years to move it forward. This is not something that has been taken lightly or without as much thought as possible to help ensure it is a success. We will now try to address your concerns directly.

1. The financial analysis assumes that, at the rate proposed, only fifty new members would be added. This implies that a large majority of existing non-URISA chapter members would not join, including the majority of our chapter members and most others. Under this scenario it is clear that most chapters would cease to operate. If the new fee structure eliminates most local chapters, we have to ask if the extra resources set aside to support the local chapters would be relevant or necessary at that point? – *The financial analysis was only the starting point. It was to see what it would cost to implement OneURISA. It was based on the results of the member survey and the services outlined in the OneURISA Blueprint approved by the URISA Board of Directors last year. The OneURISA blueprint was based on the OneURISA model of services and benefits created by the Chapters through the CAB over a 5-year period. The Financial Analysis was not intended to be the final number but instead to provide all of us with a starting point, so we could determine what services and benefits were a priority and to look at possible alternatives. The Board agrees that the membership fee suggested in the analysis would not work for URISA.*

2. We would also like take issue with the language and tone in recent discussions regarding the local chapters. We have heard them referred to in the special financial meeting in January and the February meeting as both "Glorified Mailing Lists" and "User Groups". We feel that local chapters are the lifeblood of the organization, but recent conversations given the impression that this view is not shared by the current URISA leadership and board. – *We are sorry that anything other than a positive and collaborative tone has been communicated during recent CAB meetings and the presentation of the Financial Analysis. From the beginning this has been designed to be a collaborative effort between all of URISA. If anything less than that came across, please rest assured that was not the intent. URISA has always valued the chapters and believes OneURISA will help strengthen all of us. What we did try to illustrate during those meetings was that each chapter is different. Some such as Alabama URISA*



**Fostering Excellence in GIS**

[www.URISA.org](http://www.URISA.org)

*maintain active paid membership rosters while some chapters only have email lists of contacts which attend events, and some have a mix of both. This makes it truly challenging to determine how many members we all have. This in turn makes it difficult to determine the full impact of OneURISA.*

3. As previously stated, we at The Alabama Chapter of URISA are extremely troubled by recent developments in the ONEURISA planning process. Unfortunately, we are now forced to question the motives behind the program and have begun taking steps to mitigate all risks to our local chapter. – As mentioned above the OneURISA initiative has been over 15 years in the making. It is a result of many hours of discussions during Chapter Leadership sessions at GIS Pro, URISA Board meetings, Chapter Relationships Committee (fore runner to the CAB) calls, CAB meetings and more. During all those, everyone agreed that a united URISA would be a better URISA. It would allow us all to better serve the members and the industry through better communication, reduced confusion, shared resources, more education opportunities, increased networking opportunities, larger reach and improved advocacy. That is and continues to be the driving motive for OneURISA.

We hope this has addressed your concerns. Please remember we are trying to unify 22 US Chapters and 4 International Chapters. Each chapter has its own business model. This makes the unification challenging. The ultimate goal being a stronger organization for all members.

If you have any other concerns, please feel free to submit them to the OneURISA Implementation Team. Also, URISA Immediate Past President, Tripp Corbin, is willing to make himself available to meet with the Alabama URISA Chapter Board via conference call or face to face to help address concerns if needed.

Respectfully,

URISA Board of Directors

Teresa Townsend, President

Kim McDonough, President Elect

Tripp Corbin, Immediate Past President

Steven Berry, Treasurer

Bryan Townsend, Secretary

James Armstrong, Director

Keri Brennan, Director

Lynn Dupont, Director



**Fostering Excellence in GIS**

[www.URISA.org](http://www.URISA.org)

Corey Halford, Director

Brent Jones, Director

Robert Kirkman, Director

Glenn O'Grady, Director

CC: Wendy Nelson, Cindy Post, Tom Fisher