



For immediate release

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****Press Release****

Senate Unanimously Passes Broad Open Data Mandate, OPEN Government Data Act; Now the 115th Congress Must Take Action

Washington, D.C. - Early this morning the Senate approved by unanimous consent the [Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary \(OPEN\) Government Data Act](#) (S.2852), sending a strong signal to the incoming 115th Congress that the bill can quickly be passed by both chambers upon re-introduction in January. The OPEN Government Data Act would require all federal agencies to publish their information online, using nonproprietary, machine-readable data formats.

The Senate's action this morning helps further the goal of making open data the default for federal information. "For open data to truly take hold, Congress needs to institutionalize the existing executive policy on its own terms and take ownership of a government-wide transformation," said Hudson Hollister, Executive Director of the Data Coalition.

The bill codifies and expands upon the outgoing Administration's 2013 Open Data policy ("Open Data Policy-Managing Information as an Asset", [M-13-13](#)), which has been integrated into agency policy for the past three years. Earlier this week the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored S.2852 and concluded there would be no significant budgetary impact (see the CBO statement [here](#)).

In summary, the OPEN Government Data Act would:

- Push federal agencies to take the next step in publishing their data sets in a truly accessible manner in open formats and as machine-readable data (see Sec. 5, *Requirement for making Open and Machine Readable the Default for Government Data*);
- Help map all the federal data sets (see Section 7, *Data Inventory and Planning* and Section 8, *Technology Portal*);
- Empower agency Chief Information Officers to improve the quality of the data they are publishing (see Section 9, *Enhanced Responsibility for Chief Information Officers and Chief Information Officers Council Duties*); and

- Write meaningful open data definitions into US law to enable smarter legislation in the future (see Section 4, *Federal Information and Policy Definitions*).

For more information on the legislation you can see the Data Coalition's summary page [here](#).

In May 2016, forty-eight trade associations, tech companies, and civic organizations issued a [letter](#) supporting the legislation. Signatories included Socrata, Esri, OpenDataSoft, EMC Corp, CA Technologies, Amazon Web Services, the Chamber of Commerce C_TEC, the Consumer Technology Association, CompTIA, Center for Data Innovation, R Street Institute, SPARC, the Sunlight Foundation, Niskanen Center, and the Project on Government Oversight. The Data Coalition will continue working with these organizations to encourage the 115th Congress to pass the bill.

“The passage of the OPEN Government Data Act marks another milestone in the open data movement,” said Hollister, “This bill builds on open data reforms such as the [DATA Act](#). Our Coalition and the emerging open data industry thank Senators Sasse and Schatz for their leadership.”

About the Data Coalition: The Data Coalition advocates on behalf of the private sector and the public interest for the publication of government information as standardized, open data. Open data enhances accountability, improves government management, reduces compliance costs, and stimulates innovation. Representing a cross-section of the technology industry and implementers, the Coalition's membership includes market leaders such as Workiva, Donnelley Financial Solutions, Booz Allen Hamilton, and CGI Federal and growing start-ups such as idaciti and cBEYONData. For more information, visit datacoalition.org.

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