

USGS COALITION

Testimony of the USGS Coalition
Elizabeth Duffy, Chair
Regarding the U.S. Geological Survey FY 2026 Budget
To the
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
June 13, 2025

The USGS Coalition urges Congress to maintain strong, sustained federal funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to ensure the agency continues its vital role in supporting national security, economic stability, and public safety. **To fulfill its mission and implement its 21st-Century Science Strategy, USGS requires \$1.85 billion in FY 2026 appropriations.**

Representing over 85 organizations, including businesses, scientific associations, universities, and natural resource managers, the USGS Coalition recognizes USGS's critical contributions to the nation. The USGS provides unbiased, science-based information that supports strategic decision-making across federal agencies, private industry, and state and local governments.

USGS: A Critical Investment in National Security & Economic Growth

USGS science directly supports:

- National Security & Infrastructure Protection – USGS data aids the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and intelligence agencies in monitoring natural disasters, supply chain vulnerabilities, and resource security.
- Disaster Preparedness & Response – USGS plays a key role in earthquake, flood, wildfire, and landslide monitoring, helping communities prepare for and mitigate disasters before they become costly crises.
- Energy & Mineral Independence – USGS research ensures domestic access to critical minerals and energy resources, reducing reliance on foreign supply chains and bolstering American manufacturing.
- Water & Land Resource Management – USGS provides the data needed for efficient water allocation, drought resilience, and land-use planning, all of which are essential to agriculture, industry, and infrastructure development.
- Ecosystem Management – USGS provides science that directly benefits the health, safety, and prosperity of the American people by providing information to address management and conservation issues impacting public lands and the surrounding communities that benefit from them.

Key Priorities for FY 2026:

- Ensure stable and long-term federal investment in USGS to meet national science and security needs.
- Expand research on critical minerals and rare earth elements to secure U.S. energy independence and manufacturing competitiveness.
- Strengthen disaster monitoring and response systems to reduce economic losses from floods, earthquakes, and wildfires.
- Enhance water resource management** to support agriculture, businesses, and communities facing drought and water shortages.
- Bolster ecosystems research that supports our nation's recreation, fisheries, species diversity, forest health and soil health, while combating key ecological threats, including avian flu, invasive species, and wildfire.

USGS Mission Areas Requiring Sustained Investment:

- Natural Hazards: Advanced earthquake and flood monitoring reduces disaster costs and saves lives.
- Energy & Minerals: Securing U.S.-based critical mineral supply chains reduces reliance on China and other foreign competitors.
- Water Resources: Reliable water data supports agriculture, businesses, and local governments in managing droughts and water use.
- Core Science Systems: Modern mapping and geospatial tools are essential for national defense, infrastructure projects, and economic growth.
- Ecosystems: Support for monitoring wildlife diseases, soil quality, vegetation, and wildfires, alongside CRUs and CASCs, which train resource managers and address key issues. Losing these programs would harm long-term resource management.
- Water Resources: Reliable water data, from the USGS National Streamgaging Network and made possible through Water Science Centers throughout the country, supports agriculture, businesses, and local governments in managing droughts and water use.

Despite delivering immense value with limited resources, years of chronic underfunding have severely constrained the **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** in meeting the nation's growing demands for reliable scientific data. Without sustained investment, the consequences will be far-reaching—jeopardizing disaster preparedness, weakening our ability to manage natural resources, and exposing critical supply chains to disruption – all at a far greater cost to communities and the economy than the price of action today.

We are concerned with the Administration's budget proposal to eliminate the U.S. Geological Survey's Ecosystems Mission Area, which would significantly weaken the nation's scientific foundation for managing natural resources, protecting biodiversity, and responding to environmental change. This program provides essential data on ecosystem health, wildlife populations, land use, and water quality—information that federal, state, and local decisionmakers rely on to make informed choices about development, conservation, and public safety. Ecosystem science also supports natural lands adaptation, wildfire risk reduction, and restoration of degraded lands. Without this mission area, the U.S. would lose a trusted, non-

regulatory source of science critical to sustaining our economy, communities, and natural heritage.

We strongly urge Congress to prioritize sustained, robust funding for **USGS at \$1.85 billion for FY 2026 —a necessary investment in the security, resilience, and prosperity of the United States.**

The USGS Coalition welcomes the opportunity to discuss this request further. Please contact Coalition Chair Elizabeth Duffy at eduffy@federalaffairs.com with any questions.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.