

# USGS COALITION

Testimony of the USGS Coalition  
Elizabeth Duffy, Chair  
Regarding the U.S. Geological Survey FY 2025 Budget

To the  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
May 15, 2024

The USGS Coalition is writing in support of the Administration's continued focus on the federal science apparatus, and to further recommend an increase in funding to support the critical science programming of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to better enable USGS to fulfill its mission.

The USGS Coalition, representing over 85 organizations spanning scientific associations, universities, businesses, and natural resource managers, strongly supports the Administration's emphasis on bolstering federal scientific capabilities and urges Congress to increase funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to enhance its critical science initiatives. To fully implement the agency's mission and fulfill the [USGS 21st-Century Science Strategy](#) released in 2021 will **require \$1.85 billion in annual appropriations**. Additionally, we call upon Congress to restore the \$42 million in cuts from the USGS's FY2024 enacted appropriations. We firmly believe the agency needs to reach at least this funding level to ensure that the USGS is able to respond to 21st-century challenges with 21st-century science and technology.

The USGS plays an indispensable role as the nation's premier scientific agency within the Department of the Interior, serving as a cornerstone for unbiased, evidence-based decision-making across government agencies, academia, industry, and the public. From informing land management strategies to providing essential data for disaster preparedness, the USGS's contributions are felt in every U.S. state and territory. Moreover, its collaborations with agencies such as FEMA, DOD, NASA and DOE underscore its far-reaching impact on national security, environmental stewardship, and economic prosperity. However, despite its vital contributions, the USGS has faced chronic underfunding in recent years, hindering its ability to reflect and respond to the nation's continuously evolving needs.

In light of the evolving landscape of challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and natural hazards, the USGS requires adequate resources to fulfill its mission and uphold its commitment to excellence in science. We commend the Administration's recognition of the importance of federal science and urge Congress to allocate \$1.85 billion in funding for the USGS in FY 2025, aligning with the agency's 21st-Century Science Strategy.

### Key Priorities:

- Reinforcing federal science programming to confront climate change, invasive species, mineral exploration, natural hazards, and habitat preservation.
- Supporting the America the Beautiful Initiative by identifying conservation metrics and prioritizing high-value habitats.
- Strengthening interdisciplinary teams to develop data-driven decision support tools across various mission areas.

### Specific Mission Area Needs:

- **Natural Hazards:** The USGS plays a crucial role in monitoring and assessing natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and volcanic eruptions. By investing in advanced monitoring systems and research, we can improve our ability to predict and mitigate the impacts of these events, ultimately saving lives and reducing economic losses.
- **Core Science Systems:** The USGS serves as the nation's primary mapping agency, including geologic and topographic mapping for federal and state requirements, national geospatial coordination, satellite operations and remote sensing. The agency's data and products are vital to understanding, monitoring, and detecting changes that affect the nation's natural and agricultural resources, the economy, public safety, and security, such as those produced by the 3D Elevation Program.
- **Ecosystems:** The USGS conducts research to understand and conserve our nation's ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitats. By studying ecosystem dynamics, biodiversity, and the impacts of climate change, the USGS provides essential knowledge for managing natural resources, preserving biodiversity, and climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- **Water Resources:** Water is a fundamental resource that sustains life, agriculture, industry, and ecosystems. The USGS provides critical data and analysis to support informed decision-making on water allocation, quality, and sustainability. With growing concerns about water scarcity and contamination, increased funding for the USGS is needed to address these ongoing, pressing challenges.
- **Energy and Minerals:** The USGS conducts research to assess the nation's energy and mineral resources, including fossil fuels, metals, critical minerals and rare earth elements. This information is vital for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of these resources, supporting economic growth, energy independence, and environmental stewardship. Increase funding will allow the agency to advance initiatives like Earth Mapping Resources Initiative to secure critical resources and support the energy transition.

### Challenges and Solutions:

- Ensure sustained funding to meet national needs, train the scientific workforce, and address maintenance backlogs.
- Prioritize Science Support funding to streamline operations and facilitate timely research dissemination.
- Uphold scientific integrity policies to safeguard national security, public health, and environmental conservation.

- Secure long-term funding for the USGS Library to preserve critical geological data and support diverse stakeholders.

While the USGS has achieved remarkable milestones with limited resources, there remain significant challenges that require increased investment. Sustained funding is essential to address critical needs such as research backlog, workforce development, and infrastructure modernization.

Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of upholding scientific integrity, ensuring open access to data and research findings, and preserving vital resources like the USGS Library, which serves as a cornerstone of geoscience knowledge.

**USGS Coalition urges this Committee to prioritize funding for the U.S. Geological Survey in FY 2025 at \$1.85 billion**, recognizing its indispensable role in advancing science, informing policy, and safeguarding our nation's natural resources. The USGS Coalition remains available to address any inquiries regarding this request or the initiatives outlined above. Please contact Coalition Chair Elizabeth Duffy at [eduffy@federalaffairs.com](mailto:eduffy@federalaffairs.com).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.