

# USGS Coalition

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American Congress on Surveying  
and Mapping  
American Geological Institute  
American Institute of Biological  
Sciences  
American Society for  
Photogrammetry and Remote  
Sensing  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Water Resources  
Association  
AmericaView  
Association of American  
Geographers  
Association of Ecosystem Research  
Centers  
Association of Engineering  
Geologists  
Association of Metropolitan Water  
Agencies  
Association of State Floodplain  
Managers  
Botanical Society of America  
Bureau of Economic Geology,  
University of Texas at Austin  
California Institute of Technology  
Crop Science Society of America  
Earthquake Engineering Research  
Institute  
Ecological Society of America  
Geo-Institute of ASCE  
Geological Society of America  
The Groundwater Foundation  
Interstate Council on Water Policy  
Kansas Geological Survey  
National Association of State  
Universities and Land Grant  
Colleges  
National Association of University  
Fisheries and Wildlife Programs  
National Council for Science and the  
Environment  
National Flood Determination  
Association  
National Ground Water Association  
National Institutes for Water  
Resources  
NatureServe  
OhioView  
Seismological Society of America  
Society of Economic Geologists  
Soil Science Society of America  
Universities' Council on Water  
Resources  
University Corporation for  
Atmospheric Research  
University of Southern California  
The Wildlife Society

## Testimony of the USGS Coalition

Robert Gropp, Emily Lehr, and Craig Schiffries, Co-Chairs

## Regarding the U.S. Geological Survey

FY 2005 Budget Request

## U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies

April 2, 2004

### Summary

The USGS Coalition urges Congress to increase the budget of the U.S. Geological Survey to \$1 billion in FY 2005 – the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this vitally important federal agency.

The USGS plays a central role in protecting the public from natural hazards such as floods and earthquakes, assessing water quality, providing emergency responders with geospatial data to improve homeland security, analyzing the strategic and economic implications of mineral supply and demand, and providing the science needed to manage our natural resources and combat invasive species that can threaten agriculture and public health. The USGS has nearly 400 offices, located in every state. To aid in its interdisciplinary investigations, the USGS works with over 2,000 federal, state, local, tribal and private organizations.

The USGS Coalition is an alliance of 58 organizations united by a commitment to the continued vitality of the unique combination of biological, geographical, geological, and hydrological programs of the United States Geological Survey.

### Funding Shortfall

During the past eight years, total federal spending for non-defense research and development has risen by nearly 50 percent from \$37 billion to almost \$55 billion in constant dollars. By contrast, funding for the USGS has been nearly flat, as shown in the accompanying chart (Figure 1). Even this flat funding for the USGS reflects congressional restoration of proposed budget cuts.

In language accompanying last year's spending bill, the House Appropriations Committee strongly urged the Administration "to continue to fund these critical science programs in the base budget in future years." For its part, the Senate Appropriations Committee

urged the Administration “to bear in mind the expressed public support across the United States for the Survey’s programs.”

The need for science in support of public policy decisionmaking has never been greater. USGS scientists and engineers produce knowledge and data that support water, energy and mineral resource management, wildlife and ecosystem management, and protection and prevention measures for natural disasters.

In order to meet the tremendous needs of the future, more investment is needed. That investment should be used to strengthen USGS partnerships, improve monitoring networks, produce high-quality digital geospatial data and deliver the best possible science to address societal problems and inform decision makers.

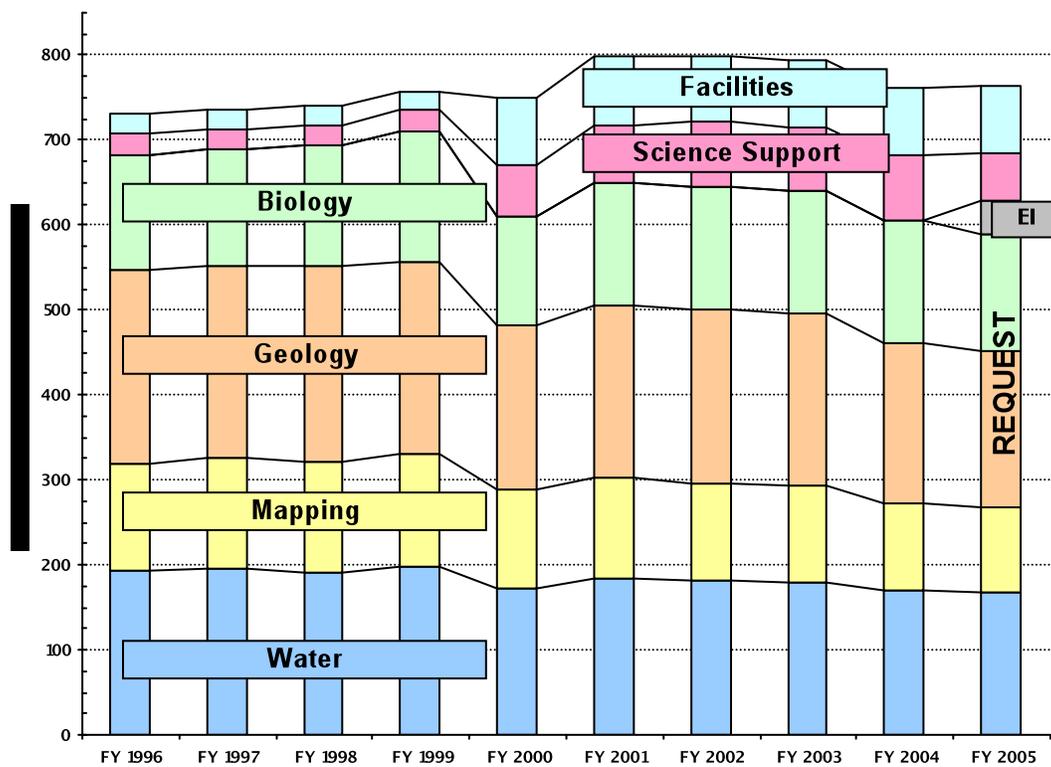


Figure 1. USGS funding in constant dollars, FY 1996 – FY 2005. EI represents the new Enterprise Information account established in the FY 2005 USGS budget request. Source: USGS budget documents.

### USGS Budget Request

The USGS Coalition urges Congress to increase the budget of the U.S. Geological Survey to \$1 billion in FY 2005, an increase of 6.5 percent above the FY 2004 enacted level, which is necessary for the agency to continue providing critical information to decisionmakers at all levels of government. The increase would enable the USGS to restore the science cuts proposed in the budget request, provide full funding for “uncontrollable” costs, and undertake a few exciting new science initiatives that would begin to reverse the cumulative effects of the long-term funding short fall discussed above (Figure 1).

The FY 2005 budget request would cut funding for the USGS by \$18.2 million or 1.9 percent to \$920.6 million. The budget request would cut \$6.5 million from the Mineral Resources program, \$6.4 million that funds the Water Resources Research Institutes, \$2.8 million for USGS fire ecology and biological fire science activities, and \$1.9 million in partnership funding for the National Map, as well as cutting other programs. The proposed budget cuts would adversely affect the ability of the USGS to achieve its mission.

The budget request also contains \$17.2 million in uncontrollable cost increases, of which \$9.1 million would be funded in the budget and \$8.1 million would be “absorbed” by various programs. Without full funding of uncontrollable cost increases, USGS program managers may be forced to curtail on-going research, hindering or preventing the delivery of data needed by natural resource managers and others.

The budget request would add \$16.1 million for new or expanded programs, including \$1.2 million for science on Department of the Interior landscape initiatives, \$2.7 million for Klamath Basin-related science, \$1.0 million for Water 2025, and \$1.0 million for invasive species research. These initiatives deserve the support of Congress.

We encourage Congress to consider additional increases that would enable the USGS to meet the tremendous need for science in support of public policy decisionmaking. We appreciate the FY 2003 and FY 2004 report language emphasizing the importance of USGS programs and recognizing the need to support cooperative initiatives. More investment is needed to strengthen USGS partnerships, improve monitoring networks, produce high-quality digital geospatial data and deliver the best possible science to address societally important problems.

### **A Sampling of Essential Services for the Nation**

The USGS has a truly national mission that extends beyond the boundaries of the nation’s public lands to encompass the homes of all citizens through natural hazards monitoring, drinking water studies, biological and geological resource assessments, and other activities.

- USGS water-quality studies help to protect the nation’s drinking water and fresh water resources by assessing how environmental and human factors affect the condition of our streams and ground water over time. The National Weather Service uses data from the USGS streamgauge network to issue flood warnings. Other agencies use the data for assessing flood risk and drought impacts. Still other scientists use streamgauge data to study fish populations and behavior or to create models that improve our understanding of how ecosystems function.
- Not only does USGS produce the topographic maps familiar to many, but it also works with partners to provide a whole new generation of high-quality, digital geospatial data products that help inform decisions by resource managers, state and local officials, and the public.
- Invasive species are a major economic, environmental and public health problem. USGS researchers track the pathways of these species and study their effects on other organisms and ecosystems.

- Nearly 80 million people in 39 states are at risk from destructive earthquakes. New USGS sensor arrays can produce real-time groundshaking maps and other products to help vulnerable urban areas reduce the human and economic effects of future quakes. The Advanced National Seismic System (ANSS) – a nationwide monitoring network, when complete, will provide emergency response personnel with real-time information on the intensity and distribution of ground shaking that can be used to guide emergency response efforts.
- USGS assessments of energy and mineral resources provide crucial information for environmentally prudent development and conservation, contributing to the nation’s economic security.
- USGS biologists are studying wildlife health issues like chronic wasting disease and West Nile virus. Because such diseases can also affect human populations, this research has important medical value as well.
- With elevated homeland security concerns, the USGS and its federal partners are developing and deploying advanced sensors to monitor vulnerable water bodies and natural resources. As the nation’s mapper, USGS provides geospatial data for an array of homeland security needs.

### **Celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the USGS**

Congress has repeatedly recognized the value of the USGS since it established the agency in 1879. In March 2004, a bipartisan group of Representatives demonstrated their appreciation for the USGS by co-sponsoring a resolution (H. Res. 556) that recognizes the agency’s important work on the occasion of its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As he introduced the resolution, Rep. Jim Moran said, “For 125 years, the United States Geological Survey has provided the science that serves as the basis for our most important decisions.” The resolution states:

“Resolved, that the House of Representatives congratulates the United States Geological Survey on its 125th anniversary and expresses strong support for the United States Geological Survey as it serves the Nation by providing timely, relevant, and objective scientific information which helps to describe and understand the Earth, minimize the loss of life and property from natural disasters, manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources, and enhance and protect the quality of life of all Americans.”

Recognizing that the USGS is a federal agency “. . .with no regulatory or land management responsibilities and is thus a trusted entity to provide impartial science that serves the needs of the Nation” (H. Res. 556), the USGS Coalition urges Congress to appropriate \$1 billion to support USGS programs that underpin responsible natural resource stewardship, improve resilience to natural and human-induced hazards, and contribute to the long-term health, security and prosperity of the nation.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request. If you would like additional information or to learn more about the USGS Coalition, please contact Robert Gropp of the American Institute of Biological Sciences ([rgropp@aibs.org](mailto:rgropp@aibs.org)), Emily M. Lehr of the American Geological Institute ([eml@agiweb.org](mailto:eml@agiweb.org)), or Craig Schiffries of the National Council for Science and the Environment ([schiffries@NCSEonline.org](mailto:schiffries@NCSEonline.org)) or visit [www.USGScoalition.org](http://www.USGScoalition.org).