

National Council for Science and the Environment

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**Testimony of the
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
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**Regarding the
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
FY 2005 Budget Request**

**To the
U.S HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies
April 2, 2004**

Summary

The National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) urges Congress to appropriate \$1 billion for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in FY 2005, an increase of 6.5 percent over FY 2004. USGS science impacts every citizen in the nation by providing critical knowledge on natural hazards, freshwater, geological and biological resources, and mapping. The 6.5 percent increase we propose for the USGS would restore damaging cuts in the budget request, provide full funding for “uncontrollable” cost increases, and allow for modest investments in a few high priority areas that would pay dividends to homeland security, economic development, natural resources management, natural hazards mitigation, and other critical national needs.

NCSE is dedicated to improving the scientific basis for environmental decisionmaking. We are supported by over 500 organizations, including universities, scientific societies, government associations, businesses and chambers of commerce, and environmental and other civic organizations. NCSE promotes science and its relationship with decisionmaking but does not take positions on environmental issues themselves.

The National Council for Science and the Environment thanks the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of appropriations for the U.S. Geological Survey.

Federal Investments in R&D

Federal investments in research, development, and science education are essential to the future well-being and prosperity of the nation and deserve the highest priority of Congress. The U.S.

Geological Survey is a critical component of the nation's R&D portfolio. "For 125 years, the United States Geological Survey has provided the science that serves as the basis for our most important decisions," said Rep. Jim Moran as he introduced a resolution (H. Res. 556) recognizing the agency's important work on the occasion of its 125th anniversary.

The National Council for Science and the Environment supports the unique combination of biological, geological, hydrological and mapping programs of the U.S. Geological Survey. 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. Even this flat funding for the USGS reflects congressional restoration of proposed budget cuts.

Last year, the House Appropriations Committee strongly urged the Administration "to continue to fund these critical [USGS] science programs in the base budget in future years." Likewise, the Senate Appropriations Committee urged the Administration "to bear in mind the expressed public support across the United States for the Survey's programs."

NCSE greatly appreciates the sustained support of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies for the U.S. Geological Survey. We are especially grateful for the Subcommittee's bipartisan leadership in restoring past cuts and providing for growth in the USGS budget. We encourage your continued support in this difficult fiscal environment.

U.S. Geological Survey Budget Request for FY 2005

The National Council for Science and the Environment urges Congress to increase the budget of the U.S. Geological Survey to \$1 billion in FY 2005, an increase of 6.5 percent over the FY 2004 enacted level. This increase would restore damaging cuts proposed in the budget request, provide full funding for "uncontrollable" cost increases, and allow for modest investments in a few high priority areas that would pay dividends to homeland security, economic development, natural resources management, natural hazards mitigation, and other critical national needs.

Under the FY 2005 budget request, funding for the USGS would fall by \$18.2 million or 1.9 percent to \$919.8 million in FY 2005. After accounting for transfers of existing funds to the agency's new Enterprise Information account, funding for Water Resources would decrease 4.2 percent, funding for Geology would decrease 3.9 percent, funding for Biological Research would decrease 2.3 percent, and funding for the Geography (formerly Mapping) would decrease 1.7 percent (Table 1).

These proposed budget cuts would impair the ability of the USGS to achieve its important mission. In FY 2005, \$6.5 million would be cut from the Mineral Resources program, \$6.4 million would be cut from the Water Resources Research Institutes, \$2.8 million would be cut from USGS fire ecology and biological fire science activities, \$1.9 million would be cut from partnership funding for the National Map, and a variety of other programs would suffer losses as well.

In addition to explicit funding cuts, the FY 2005 budget request would require the USGS to absorb \$8.1 million in uncontrollable cost increases. As in past years, the failure to provide full funding for uncontrollable costs increases may force the USGS to curtail on-going science that is needed by the nation.

The FY 2005 budget request would provide \$16.1 million for the USGS to establish or expand several promising science initiatives that merit the support of Congress. The request would add \$2.7 million for Klamath Basin-related science, \$1.2 million for science on Department of the Interior landscape initiatives, \$1.0 million for Water 2025, and \$1.0 million for invasive species research.

We encourage Congress to provide the USGS with a budget that will allow for the modest growth necessary to address emerging needs for science. After years of stagnant funding and absorbing uncontrollable cost increases, the USGS has a growing backlog of monitoring and science needs. The National Council for Science and the Environment urges Congress to appropriate \$1 billion for the USGS in FY 2005. This investment will help the USGS improve monitoring networks, strengthen partnerships, produce high-quality data, and deliver impartial science that serves the needs of the nation.

USGS Serves 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, water resource studies, biological and geological resource assessments, and other activities.

The USGS has tremendous strength in areas that are critical to homeland security, such as protecting water resources and producing digital maps that are needed for assessing terrorist threats and responding to terrorist attacks.

The USGS helps protect people across the nation from potentially disastrous consequences of geologic hazards, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, erosion and floods. For example, USGS sensor systems provide information that can substantially reduce the impact of earthquakes, leading to reduced loss of human life and property.

Water use and availability are posing increasing challenges for the nation's policy makers. USGS streamgage data and water quality studies provide the information they need to manage our water resources wisely. The USGS streamgage network also supplies the National Weather Service with the information it needs to issue flood warnings.

USGS biologists study wildlife health issues like chronic wasting disease and West Nile virus. Since wildlife diseases often have implications for human health, this research can have important medical value. USGS researchers also study the spread of invasive species, which can have significant economic, environmental, and public health impacts.

Table 1. U.S. Geological Survey (budget authority in millions of dollars)							
USGS Activity/Subactivity	Budget Authority (\$ Millions)			FY 04-05 Change ¹		FY 04-05 Change adj. for transfers ²	
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
	Actual	Enacted	Request	(\$ mill.)		(\$ mill.)	
Mapping, Remote Sensing, & Geog. Investigations							
<i>Cooperative Topographic Mapping</i>	81.1	80.8	71.0	-9.8	-12.1%	-2.0	-2.5%
<i>Land Remote Sensing</i>	35.7	33.7	33.1	-0.5	-1.6%	0.0	0.1%
<i>Geographic Analysis & Monitoring</i>	16.4	15.2	14.8	-0.5	-3.1%	-0.2	-1.4%
Subtotal	133.2	129.8	118.9	-10.8	-8.3%	-2.2	-1.7%
Geologic Hazards, Resources, and Processes							
<i>Geologic Hazard Assessment</i>	75	75.3	73.0	-2.3	-3.0%	-0.9	-1.2%
<i>Geologic Landsc. & Coast. Assess.</i>	78.7	78.4	75.2	-3.1	-4.0%	-1.7	-2.1%
<i>Geologic Resource Assessment</i>	79.5	80.5	72.5	-8.0	-10.0%	-6.6	-8.2%
Subtotal	233.2	234.2	220.8	-13.4	-5.7%	-9.1	-3.9%
Water Resources Investigations							
<i>Hydrolog. Monit., Assess. & Rsch.</i>	136.8	145.3	139.7	-5.6	-3.9%	-2.7	-1.9%
<i>Cooperative Water Program</i>	64.4	64.0	63.0	-1.0	-1.5%	0.1	0.1%
<i>Water Resources Research Act</i>	6	6.4	0.0	-6.4	-100.0%	-6.4	-100.0%
Subtotal	207.2	215.7	202.7	-13.0	-6.0%	-9.0	-4.2%
Biological Research							
<i>Biological Research & Monitoring</i>	132.1	135.1	129.2	-5.9	-4.4%	-3.7	-2.7%
<i>Biological Information</i>	22.8	24.7	24.3	-0.4	-1.6%	0.0	0.0%
<i>Cooperative Research Units</i>	14.9	14.8	14.1	-0.6	-4.4%	-0.5	-3.1%
Subtotal	169.8	174.5	167.6	-6.9	-4.0%	-4.0	-2.3%
Enterprise Information							
Enterprise Information			45.1	45.1	100.0%	45.1	100.0%
Science Support	85.2	90.8	68.7	-22.1	-24.3%	5.1	5.6%
Facilities	90.8	93.0	95.9	3.0	3.2%	3.0	3.2%
TOTAL	919.3	938.0	919.8	-18.2	-1.9%	-18.2	-1.9%

Source: *The Interior Budget in Brief: Fiscal Year 2005*, USGS FY 2005 Budget documents and NCSE analysis

¹ Change from enacted FY 2004 USGS appropriations to the President's FY 2005 budget request for USGS.

² These columns include the change from the enacted FY 2004 USGS appropriations to the President's FY 2005 budget request for USGS, adjusted to compensate for transfers from disciplinary accounts and programs to the new Enterprise Information account.