

June 16, 2017

Senator Lisa Murkowski  
Chair, Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate

Senator Tom Udall  
Ranking Member, Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chair, Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member, Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives

### **Re: Proposed Cuts to the Budget for the U.S. Geological Survey Library**

The undersigned organizations strongly urge you to provide continued funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Library, one of the world's largest and most important Earth and natural resources libraries. Information lies at the heart of all scientific endeavors. The USGS Library is a core part of the infrastructure of the geoscience profession, which includes energy, minerals, water, the environment, natural hazards, and other Earth topics that are critical to national safety and prosperity.

The USGS Library, which is funded at \$5.8 million for FY 2017, provides approximately \$45 million in value annually, calculated solely on the cost of replacing the Library's services on the retail market. This return on investment of over \$7 for every \$1 invested takes no account of the value accrued to the nation from the use of the information accessed through the Library.

The President's budget request would cut funding to the USGS Library by 52 percent, eliminate three-quarters of the Library's full-time employees, and eliminate three or possibly all four library locations (Reston, Va., Lakewood, Colo., Flagstaff, Ariz., and Menlo Park, Calif.). The public would no longer have any access to the USGS Library. All of the library's collections would be placed in a dark archive, which means that they would be stored in the cheapest appropriate warehouse and access would be limited to a couple of research librarians – to all intents and purposes, the Library's unique collections would be inaccessible to USGS and other government personnel, in addition to being inaccessible to the public.

If these resources are rendered inaccessible, the nation will lose an invaluable scientific asset and the opportunity for continued commercial return from the information housed in the Library. We would also lose the federal investment that has already been made in the Library's collections. The Library houses more than 1.5 million volumes and more than three million maps, photographs, and field records. This information is timeless and irreplaceable – geological observations do not go out of date even if interpretations change, and **more than one-third of this information is unique to the USGS or available from fewer than ten libraries worldwide.**

The USGS Library is vital to the economic prosperity and well-being of the country. Small businesses and consultants in the energy, mining, environmental, and engineering sectors are among the most frequent users of the Library's collections. State and local agencies, universities, and research institutions also rely heavily on the USGS Library for information that they could not otherwise access. The Library's online services attract more than 1.3 million visitors per year, including many teachers and students working on projects. Some 80 percent of the people who use the USGS Library in Reston, Va., are from outside the USGS. Closing public access to the USGS Library would cause financial hardship, particularly to small energy and infrastructure businesses that are the foundation for economic growth and employment.

We recognize that you face difficult choices in crafting the FY 2018 budget and we appreciate this opportunity to present our views on the importance of the USGS Library. We request that you provide \$5.8 million to the USGS Library to support continued access to a key national asset.

**If you have any questions, please contact Aaron W. Johnson, American Institute of Professional Geologists ([awj@aipg.org](mailto:awj@aipg.org)) or Maeve Boland, American Geosciences Institute ([mboland@agiweb.org](mailto:mboland@agiweb.org)).**

Sincerely,

American Institute of Professional Geologists  
American Geosciences Institute  
American Association of Petroleum Geologists  
American Geophysical Union  
American Society of Plant Taxonomists  
Association of American State Geologists  
Association of Earth Science Editors  
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists  
Association for Women Geoscientists  
Geological Society of America  
Geoscience Information Society

Industrial Minerals Association – North America  
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies  
National Mining Association  
Petroleum History Institute  
Reinsurance Association of America  
Seismological Society of America  
Society of Economic Geologists  
The Karst Waters Institute  
The Society for Organic Petrology  
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research

CC: The Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior  
Dr. William Werkheiser, Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey  
Arizona: Senators McCain and Flake, Representative O'Halleran  
California: Senators Feinstein and Harris, Representatives Speier and Eshoo  
Colorado: Senators Bennet and Gardner, Representative Perlmutter  
Virginia: Senators Warner and Kaine, Representatives Connolly and Comstock