

Senate oversight hearing on USGS

April 7, 2016

The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources met on April 7 to conduct an oversight hearing on programs at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

During the hearing, which was primarily friendly, Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) voiced concern over what she considered “mission creep” within the agency from its core focus of geologic mapping, natural hazards, and energy and mineral resources.

However, questions from committee members by and large centered on state-specific issues, such as earthquakes in Alaska and Washington, invasive species in Hawaii and Michigan, and hydraulic fracturing in West Virginia.

Witnesses from the USGS, state-level government, academia, and the nonprofit sector provided testimony on the importance of a variety of USGS programs. The American Geosciences Institute’s (AGI) Executive Director, Dr. Patrick Leahy, provided testimony on the importance of USGS as a singular repository for geologic information, as well as its importance in helping communities prepare for and respond to all natural hazards, and its role providing timely and relevant information on the quantity and location of mineral resources throughout the United States and the world.

Sources: Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
