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## Briefing underscores the importance of earth science data in decision making

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The Advances in Earth Science Coalition, a group of professional geoscience societies and federal agencies, held a briefing moderated by Virginia Burkett (U.S. Geological Survey) to discuss how earthquake, air quality, and environmental data can inform policy making on natural resource management and disaster preparedness. The speakers included Katrin Hafner of Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), Tim Dye of Sonoma Technology Inc. (STI), and Mark Bennett of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Hafner explained that seismological data collected from 150 stations worldwide can identify earthquake-prone areas and facilitate disaster preparedness. These data are incorporated into a freely available archive to increase public awareness of earthquake hazards and support disaster monitoring by agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Dye summarized Sonoma Technology's effort to help federal agencies, state and local government, industry, nonprofits, and the public make informed decisions regarding air pollution. AirNow, an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program operated by STI, provides daily air quality forecasts and has become a primary resource for a broad audience of organizations, agencies, and the public.

Bennett highlighted land subsidence issues in the Chesapeake Bay and the ways in which continued monitoring may help experts project future sea level rise and prepare for future changes. According to Bennett, long-term datasets capture Earth's dynamic environmental conditions, allow the comparison of information through time, and guide decision makers as they formulate appropriate policies.

Sources: Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), Sonoma Technology Inc., U.S. Geological Survey, Environmental Protection Agency

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