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On September 17, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources Chairman Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced their National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act (S.2056).

On September 22, they discussed the bill in a hearing with the committee.

If enacted, the bill would instruct the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to establish a National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System to monitor volcanoes and warn citizens of impending volcanic activity. It would include a 24-hour volcano watch office and a national volcano data center. It would also establish a grant program to fund further research into volcano monitoring and support efforts to continually modernize the system as relevant technology develops.

During the hearing, Sen. Cantwell explained the importance of monitoring volcanic hazards. Sen. Cantwell went on to say that while these hazards may seem distant and far away for her colleagues representing more eastern jurisdictions, “we need the science to help guide us here [in the Pacific Northwest].”

The bill still needs to pass the Committee before it can be considered by the full Senate. If the bill is enacted, the USGS would have only 90 days to come up with a plan to implement the bill.

Sources: Congress.gov, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
