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On September 14, Senators Murkowski (R-AK) and King (I-ME) introduced a bill (S.1787) to reauthorize the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP) through 2023. Overseen by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the program was established in the National Geologic Mapping Act of 1992 in order to create detailed geologic maps of the US. It was last reauthorized in 2009, and is set to expire in 2018.

The NCGMP works with Federal, State, and university partners in FEDMAP, STATEMAP, and EDMAP, respectively, to produce maps that are then added to the National Geologic Map Database. For STATEMAP and EDMAP, the program matches funds on a 1:1 level for proposed mapping projects. The program partners extensively with the American Association of State Geologists (AASG) to determine Federal and State mapping priorities, as well as carry out the mapping.

Understanding the geology of an area is essential for making well-informed policy decisions. The reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), which was introduced earlier in the month, would now require the completion of a series of geologic and hazard risk maps so that decision makers can better identify at-risk areas and mitigate disasters. Making decisions on resource and land management also starts with geologic maps. Still, less than a third of the U.S. is mapped at the level of detail needed to make these decisions.

The President's fiscal year 2018 Budget Request proposed cutting the program by \$2 million, but the House rejected those cuts in the appropriations bill which was passed in their omnibus package. The Senate has yet to markup an Interior appropriations bill.

Sources: Library of Congress, US Geological Survey
