

## Geoscience Policy Recommendations for the New Administration and the 115th Congress



Geoscientists gather and interpret data about the Earth and other planets, providing the data, tools, and expertise to help solve some of America’s greatest challenges. The policy proposals laid out in this document are centered around five high-level thematic areas:

1. **Enhancing national and homeland security**
2. **Increasing economic prosperity**
3. **Securing resources and strengthening national infrastructure**
4. **Supporting strong and resilient communities, and**
5. **Growing a dynamic workforce**

This set of policy recommendations outlines ways to achieve our shared national interests where the geosciences play a significant role. The policy proposals build on the consensus document *Geoscience for America’s Critical Needs: Invitation to a National Policy Dialogue*, which was developed for the 2016 election.

This report highlights the shared priorities of nine professional geoscientific societies that represent some 250,000 members. We in the geoscience community offer to share our scientific expertise and perspectives as you craft national policies to build a strong and competitive nation.

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The specific policy proposals for each of the thematic areas are as follows:

### Enhancing national and homeland security

1. Support and enhance the nation’s strategic Earth observational infrastructure and invest in the interpretation and preservation of this data.
2. Prioritize natural hazards research and monitoring to minimize risk to people and infrastructure.
3. Invest in America’s icebreakers to maintain our military and economic capabilities in the Polar regions.
4. Invest in research to promote the development of innovative technologies for water reuse, water recycling, and managed aquifer recharge.

### Increasing economic prosperity

1. Support robust energy research and develop solutions to reduce potential environmental impacts of energy extraction and generation.
2. Support and invest in regional ocean planning initiatives to protect and encourage responsible production of our ocean's natural resources.
3. Support agricultural and aquacultural data collection, analysis, and application for efficient and sustainable food production.
4. Gain a better understanding of soil properties and their relation to valuable ecosystem services.
5. Identify alternative uses or storage options for produced waters, carbon dioxide, and other energy waste streams.
6. Define the composition, structure, and geologic processes of the Earth's crust.

### Securing resources and strengthening national infrastructure

1. Examine mineral commodities from discovery to disposal to ensure stable supply chains for our infrastructure and economy.
2. Mitigate the high risk associated with nuclear waste.
3. Invest in water infrastructure to ensure access to safe and cost-effective drinking water for all.
4. Support collection and dissemination of water monitoring data.

### Supporting strong and resilient communities

1. Improve communication to mitigate the impact of natural hazards on people, buildings, and infrastructure.
2. Invest in soil microbiome research as a new frontier connecting biology, medicine, and agriculture.
3. Assess and improve the operation of deep injection wells to ensure community safety.

### Growing a dynamic workforce

1. Support strong federal investments in basic geoscience research to train and develop future geoscientists.
2. Invest in a vibrant and dynamic STEM-focused workforce to increase our global competitiveness.
3. Establish infrastructure to support robust aquaculture systems to create new jobs and business opportunities.

The societies listed below do not necessarily endorse or have expertise on every recommendation in this report.

Signed: **American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Association of American State Geologists, American Geophysical Union, American Geosciences Institute, American Institute of Professional Geologists, Consortium for Ocean Leadership, Geological Society of America, National Ground Water Association, Soil Science Society of America.**

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