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## USGS nominee testifies before Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

On May 13, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to consider the nomination of Dr. Suzette Kimball to serve as Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Dr. Kimball, who holds a doctorate in environmental sciences, previously worked for the National Park Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She has served as Acting Director of USGS since 2013.

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) expressed concern that USGS has lost sight of its core mission, noting that there has been a decrease in internal funding for programs that serve to detect and prevent natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and floods. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) also signaled concern that USGS has not focused enough resources on landslide research. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) inquired about critical minerals research and the growing demand for rare earth elements and their use in civilian and defense technologies.

Dr. Kimball stressed the importance of USGS addressing issues related to improving methods of coping with natural disasters such as earthquake early warning, as well as examining the impacts of mining rare earth elements. Dr. Kimball also voiced support for comprehensive Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) surveys to aid in the understanding of landslides and to develop a map of landslide prone areas.

Dr. Kimball's nomination still needs to pass the Committee before it is sent to the Senate floor for further consideration by the full Senate.

Source: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

*Updated 6/9/14*

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