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## Oliver Stephenson Named 2022-2023 AGI Fisher Congressional Fellow

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) congratulates Oliver Stephenson on his selection as the 2022-2023 William L. Fisher Congressional Geoscience Fellow. The Fisher Fellowship offers geoscientists the unique opportunity to spend a year in Washington, D.C., working as a staff member in the office of a member of Congress or with a congressional committee.

Currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Seismological Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), Stephenson uses satellite data, deep learning, and computer simulations to understand earthquakes, how they break faults and deform the Earth, and the damage they do to buildings. His research has led to a method for rapidly locating damaged buildings after earthquakes - a method now being incorporated into NASA disaster response products - and fueled his aspirations to build understanding among the public and policymaking world.

Stephenson began his academic career studying physics at Cambridge University, but a desire to apply science to real-world challenges led him to study earthquakes at Caltech. During his Ph.D. studies, Stephenson founded a science communication website, Caltech Letters, that published more than 50 articles; helped to establish ComSciCon-Los Angeles, a regional offshoot of the national Communicating Science Conference; and worked with seismologist Dr. Lucy Jones and other graduate students to lobby policymakers on earthquake safety.

"I want to ensure that the best science is used to address the huge societal problems we face, in a just and equitable way," said Stephenson. "I am fortunate to have received an amazing scientific training. Now I am grateful for the opportunity this fellowship will give me to learn firsthand how policy is made by working directly for a member of Congress or congressional committee."

"To ensure that public policy is informed by the latest, most sound geoscience, we must be part of the decision-making process," said AGI Executive Director Jonathan Arthur. "Ollie Stephenson's dual commitment to public outreach and working with those in the policy arena will serve him and his new Capitol Hill colleagues well. This, in turn, serves the geosciences and society."

Previously, Stephenson earned a master's degree in Geophysics from Caltech, as well as a master's and a B.A. in Physics from Cambridge. Recently he worked for a year in the American Geophysical Union's Voices for Science program, speaking with congressional staffers about geoscience issues and studying the energy regulatory environment in California to formulate ways of equitably and more effectively addressing climate change.

Each year, AGI's Fisher Fellow joins more than two dozen other scientists and engineers for an intensive orientation program on the legislative and executive branches, organized by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which also guides the placement process and provides educational and collegial programs throughout the year. Learn more at <https://www.americangeosciences.org/policy/internships-and-fellowships>.

### About AGI

The American Geosciences Institute (AGI), a federation of scientific and professional associations representing over a quarter-million geoscientists, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving the geoscience community and addressing the needs of society. AGI headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia.

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