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The Senate Committee on Appropriations released a committee report to accompany their Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill on August 1. Committee reports allow legislators to make their views on funding levels public at a time when the Senate appropriations process has come to a halt, and it is unclear whether specific appropriations bills will be voted on in committee and on the Senate floor. The Senate Interior and Environment Appropriations subcommittee leadership issued a statement saying the report release is an “important step towards the negotiation of a fiscally responsible and balanced Fiscal Year 2015 Interior appropriations bill.”

The draft bill calls for \$1.046 billion in funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Although the funding levels are \$14 million more than the fiscal year (FY) 2014 enacted level and \$10.3 million more than the funding level passed by the House of Representatives, the bill appropriates \$27.3 million less than the President’s request for FY 2015.

Ecosystems, Climate and Land Use Change, Energy, Minerals, and Environmental Health, Core Science Systems, Science Support, and Facilities mission areas would receive funding below the President’s request according to the committee report. Only Core Science Systems and Science Support mission areas have appropriations levels cut from the FY 2014 enacted level. The Natural Hazards and Water Resources mission areas would receive funding above the President’s request.

The bill would increase Natural Hazards funding 5.3 percent above FY 2014 levels. Within this mission area, a pilot program for a public earthquake early warning system would be allocated \$5 million. The Volcano Hazards program would receive \$2 million more this year for upgrades, and the committee stated their support for the work being done in the Landslides Hazard program to assess post-wildfire debris flow hazards.

Sources: American Institute of Physics, Senate Appropriations Committee
