

## House hearing examines benefits of data preservation

September 17, 2014

The House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on September 17 to discuss legislation to reauthorize the National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP). Established in 2005 as a part of the Energy Policy Act, the NGGDPP directs the Secretary of the Interior through the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to work with stakeholders to maintain publicly accessible repositories of geological and geophysical data including maps, well logs, and samples. The Data Preservation Act of 2014 (H.R. 5066) introduced by Congressman Dan Benishek (R-MI) would authorize funding for the NGGDPP at \$30 million per fiscal year through 2019.

Witnesses from industry, federal agencies, and state entities testified before the subcommittee about the inherent value of the NGGDPP, including the National Data Catalog and the ability to re-analyze historical samples as technologies advance. They also noted, however, that many repositories are filled to capacity and that current funding levels for the NGGDPP do not support improvements to facilities necessary for the continued storage of new samples.

Rep. Benishek's district has directly benefitted from the program; Michigan Potash Co. recently discovered an untapped potash deposit, worth an estimated \$65 billion, from retested samples at a NGGDPP repository.

Sources: House Natural Resources Committee

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