

Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (<https://www.americangeosciences.org>)

Home > Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee holds hearing on natural hazards programs

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee holds hearing on natural hazards programs

January 30, 2018

On January 30, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a full committee hearing to address the role of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in preparing for and responding to natural hazards, as well as the current status of mapping and monitoring systems.

After a 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of her Alaskan hometown on January 23, City of Kodiak Mayor Pat Branson testified regarding the town's recent experience with emergency response and preparedness. Although all earthquake and tsunami monitoring and warning systems operated seamlessly, Mayor Branson indicated that there were still significant strains on local emergency responders, who rushed to get civilians to higher ground. Washington State Geologist Dave Norman pointed out that Ms. Kodiak relied on a new local flood evaluation map funded by the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program. Mr. Norman thanked the members for recently reauthorizing the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act (33 U.S.C. 3201) and urged for the passage of the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act (S.346) and the National Landslide Preparedness Act (S.698). Both S.346 and S.698 are included as titles in the Energy and Natural Resources Act of 2017 (S.1460), which currently awaits action on the Senate floor.

Seismologist Michael West of the Alaska Earthquake Center agreed with Mr. Norman's recommendations and additionally endorsed the reauthorization of the National Earthquake and Hazards Reduction Act (NEHRP) (S.1768), highlighting the continued development of the Advanced National Seismic System (ANSS) for earthquake early warning capabilities. USGS Associate Director for Natural Hazards, David Applegate, reassured Dr. West that the USGS is making strides in retaining the National Science Foundation's EarthScope Transportable Array (USArray), currently deployed in Alaska, which is slated for decommission by 2019. Furthermore, Karen Berry, Colorado State Geologist and President-elect of the American Association of State Geologists (AASG), emphasized the need to reauthorize the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP) (H.R.2763) in order to map the nation's geology at the land-use planning scale as well as the expansion of the 3D Elevation Program (3DEP) for better mapping and monitoring of all geologic hazards.

Sources: Alaska Department of Natural Resources; Library of Congress; Office of the Law Revision Council; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
