

**Testimony Submitted on Behalf of
The Minerals Science and Information Coalition**

Submitted by Mark Ellis, Chair

**To the United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies**

27 April, 2018

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Minerals Science and Information Coalition, thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement to the record on Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 appropriations related to the Mineral Resources Program within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The **Minerals Science and Information Coalition** (“MSIC” or “the Coalition”) is a broad-based alliance of minerals and materials interests united in advocating for reinvigorated minerals science and information functions in the federal government. The Coalition is comprised of trade associations, scientific and professional societies, groups representing the extractive industries, processors, manufacturers, other mineral and material supply-chain users, and other consumers of federal minerals science and information.

MSIC supports the President’s request for \$58 million for the U.S. Geological Survey’s Mineral Resources Program for FY19 and commends the maintenance of funding levels for minerals science in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.

Every sector of industry relies on a variety of minerals to generate their end products, making a stable and reliable supply of minerals vital for the continued growth and success of our economy. Minerals are critical ingredients in specialized applications for national defense and energy technologies, as well as essential building blocks for buildings, roads and civic infrastructure projects. They are used in the manufacture of paper, glass, ceramics, plastics, refined metals, and a host of intermediary materials. These minerals and materials are vital for manufacturing products that define our daily lives including automobiles, mobile phones, and computers. Whether acting as the raw materials for manufacturing processes or as the end products themselves, minerals are part of daily life in virtually every product we use.

A stable and reliable mineral supply chain is critical for the continued growth and success of our economy. Supply chains can be long, complex, and vulnerable to disruption for many reasons. The restrictions in the supply of rare earth elements, for example, threaten the production of components essential for U.S. defense systems, in addition to a vast array of communications, clean energy, electronics, automotive, and medical products. Understanding both our domestic mineral resources and the greater supply chain is imperative as our reliance on foreign imports continues to grow. MSIC is pleased to note the commitment by the Administration and Secretary Zinke to invest in the Mineral Resources Program (MRP) at USGS, as seen through the Executive and Secretarial Orders on Critical Minerals and the FY18-19 funding requests. The

Coalition is supportive of the funding requests and increased awareness of the importance of minerals science and information.

USGS Mineral Resources Program

The Minerals Science and Information Coalition supports the prioritization of USGS's Mineral Resources Program as it is vitally important to our national defense and economic well-being. The nation's manufacturing, pharmaceutical, and agricultural sectors rely on impartial information from the federal government to build stable supply chains. The MRP assists decision-makers in making informed choices by providing reliable, accurate information about the location, quantity, and quality of mineral resources. This information is the foundation for identifying and anticipating existing and emerging vulnerabilities: it is paramount for sound decision making by business leaders and policymakers.

This includes USGS's development of the **Three Dimensional mapping and Economic Empowerment Program (3DEEP)**, to improve the topographic, geological, and geophysical mapping of the United States. Programs such as 3DEEP create a strong scientific foundation for understanding our resources and allow for the development of longterm, proactive public policies.

Equally important to current supply chain studies, the minerals science conducted by MRP covers the full life cycle of minerals, from the discovery of mineral deposits to the disposal of mineral products, including understanding how mineral deposits are formed, the nature and location of mineral deposits, and the environmental issues associated with responsible mineral extraction and land restoration. The MRP has a long and distinguished history of research and assessment of our nation's mineral resources, from production through life cycle. The holistic understanding of minerals science allows us to balance our use and maximize the value of our natural resources.

The **National Minerals Information Center (NMIC)**, within MRP, is the premier source of information on the worldwide supply of, demand for, and flow of minerals and materials. The NMIC's consistency and reliability of data over decades are its greatest strengths. NMIC's data and products are used throughout the federal government to support economic, national security, and land use decision-making. NMIC's data is also critical to private sector investment and financial institutions. Due to our expanding use of a range of critical and strategic mineral commodities that are essential to our defense, economy, and wellbeing, the Mineral Science and Information Coalition applauds the Administration's commitment to funding minerals science. The FY19 funding request will help guarantee NMIC receives the resources needed to develop and maintain a robust forecasting function for the minerals sector.

The Mineral Science and Information Coalition encourages you to fund these programs at the requested levels and thanks you for understanding and valuing the role USGS and minerals science, specifically the Minerals Resource Program and National Minerals Information Center, play in our economic and national security.

American Chemical Society
American Geosciences Institute

American Exploration & Mining Association
American Physical Society
Association of American State Geologists
Industrial Minerals Association – North America
National Industrial Sand Association
National Mining Association
National Stone, Sand, and Gravel Association
Society of Economic Geologists, Inc

If you would like any additional information for the record, please contact Ariel Hill-Davis, Vice President, Industry and Regulatory Affairs, Industrial Minerals Association – North America, 1200 18th St NW, Suite 1150, Washington, D.C. 20036. arielhilldavis@ima-na.org. 202-457-0200.