

June 16, 2017

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate

Senator Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair, Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member, Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: Proposed Cuts to the Budget for the U.S. Geological Survey Library

The undersigned organizations strongly urge you to provide continued funding for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Library, one of the world's largest and most important Earth and natural resources libraries. Information lies at the heart of all scientific endeavors. The USGS Library is a core part of the infrastructure of the geoscience profession, which includes energy, minerals, water, the environment, natural hazards, and other Earth topics that are critical to national safety and prosperity.

The USGS Library, which is funded at \$5.8 million for FY 2017, provides approximately \$45 million in value annually, calculated solely on the cost of replacing the Library's services on the retail market. This return on investment of over \$7 for every \$1 invested takes no account of the value accrued to the nation from the use of the information accessed through the Library.

The President's budget request would cut funding to the USGS Library by 52 percent, eliminate three-quarters of the Library's full-time employees, and eliminate three or possibly all four library locations (Reston, Va., Lakewood, Colo., Flagstaff, Ariz., and Menlo Park, Calif.). The public would no longer have any access to the USGS Library. All of the library's collections would be placed in a dark archive, which means that they would be stored in the cheapest appropriate warehouse and access would be limited to a couple of research librarians – to all intents and purposes, the Library's unique collections would be inaccessible to USGS and other government personnel, in addition to being inaccessible to the public.

If these resources are rendered inaccessible, the nation will lose an invaluable scientific asset and the opportunity for continued commercial return from the information housed in the Library. We would also lose the federal investment that has already been made in the Library's collections. The Library houses more than 1.5 million volumes and more than three million maps, photographs, and field records. This information is timeless and irreplaceable – geological observations do not go out of date even if interpretations change, and **more than one-third of this information is unique to the USGS or available from fewer than ten libraries worldwide.**

The USGS Library is vital to the economic prosperity and well-being of the country. Small businesses and consultants in the energy, mining, environmental, and engineering sectors are among the most frequent users of the Library's collections. State and local agencies, universities, and research institutions also rely heavily on the USGS Library for information that they could not otherwise access. The Library's online services attract more than 1.3 million visitors per year, including many teachers and students working on projects. Some 80 percent of the people who use the USGS Library in Reston, Va., are from outside the USGS. Closing public access to the USGS Library would cause financial hardship, particularly to small energy and infrastructure businesses that are the foundation for economic growth and employment.

We recognize that you face difficult choices in crafting the FY 2018 budget and we appreciate this opportunity to present our views on the importance of the USGS Library. We request that you provide \$5.8 million to the USGS Library to support continued access to a key national asset.

If you have any questions, please contact Aaron W. Johnson, American Institute of Professional Geologists (awj@aipg.org) or Maeve Boland, American Geosciences Institute (mboland@agiweb.org).

Sincerely,

American Institute of Professional Geologists
American Geosciences Institute
American Association of Petroleum Geologists
American Geophysical Union
American Society of Plant Taxonomists
Association of American State Geologists
Association of Earth Science Editors
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists
Association for Women Geoscientists
Geological Society of America
Geoscience Information Society

Industrial Minerals Association – North America
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
National Mining Association
Petroleum History Institute
Reinsurance Association of America
Seismological Society of America
Society of Economic Geologists
The Karst Waters Institute
The Society for Organic Petrology
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research

Additional signatory, added after circulation:
National Association of Geoscience Teachers

CC: The Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior
Dr. William Werkheiser, Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey
Arizona: Senators McCain and Flake, Representative O'Halleran
California: Senators Feinstein and Harris, Representatives Speier and Eshoo
Colorado: Senators Bennet and Gardner, Representative Perlmutter
Virginia: Senators Warner and Kaine, Representatives Connolly and Comstock