

The Ecological Society of America

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ESA Statement in support of the U.S. Geological Survey

Ecological scientists have long relied on information from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in conducting their research on the functions and quality of our natural environment. The USGS plays a unique role in keeping the U.S. government, public, and scientific community knowledgeable about its energy, mineral, water and other natural resources as well as potential environmental hazards. It is for this reason that the Executive and Public Affairs Committees of the Ecological Society of America, the nation's leading scientific society of ecologists of more than 7,000 members, are compelled to submit the following statement on behalf of the Ecological Society of America:

USGS maps and spatial databases provide the only unbiased source of mapped data in this country and around the world. The USGS thus provides data crucial to scientific research and resource management. Aquatic ecologists, for example, rely heavily on USGS water resources programs, while other researchers require USGS data on land forms, land cover and land use. In addition, by providing the most complete and accurate monitoring system for surface water, groundwater, seismic and structural geology, the USGS generates data vital in learning more about such environmental hazards as floods, earthquakes and volcanic activity.

The USGS has served our country well for over a century. In fulfilling its on-going responsibility to produce scientific data on our nation's geology, water, energy, mineral resources and natural hazards, the USGS provides an essential service to the American public. No other organization, public or private, could take on its responsibility. Were the USGS to be eliminated, most large-scale environmental studies would be compromised. We foresee significant negative consequences to U.S. environmental science and resource management should there be substantial cuts in the capabilities of the USGS or modifications of its mission.

February 22, 1995