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Testimony for the Record
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To the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Regarding the US Geological Survey FY 2018 Budget

April 17, 2017

On behalf of the Ecological Society of America (ESA), the world's largest society of professional ecologists representing over 10,000 members across the country, I write to urge you to provide **\$1.2 billion for the US Geological Survey (USGS) for Fiscal Year 2018** and to **reject proposed cuts to the agency's FY 2017 funding**. ESA is concerned with the administration's proposal to cut the USGS FY 2018 budget by nearly 15% to \$900 million, a funding reduction that would significantly restrict the agency's ability to fulfill its mission and provide important impartial scientific information to decision makers and American citizens. We urge you to preserve funding for the USGS so the agency can continue its critical work of maintaining our nation's natural resources, ensuring environmental health, and protecting public health.

The USGS plays a unique role within the Department of the Interior, conducting research across a broad array of scientific disciplines and providing data that informs responses to many of the nation's greatest challenges. To highlight just a few examples, USGS science:

- Reduces risks from **natural hazards** – including earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, flooding, drought, and wildfires – that jeopardize human lives and result in billions of dollars in damages annually.
- Informs management of **freshwater resources** – both above and below the land surface – for drinking water, agriculture, and commercial, industrial, recreational, and ecological purposes.
- Informs sound management of **natural resources** on federal and state lands, including control of invasive species and wildlife diseases that cause billions of dollars in economic losses. This information is shared with other Interior bureaus and state agencies to allow for adequate monitoring and management.
- Helps predict the impacts of **land use** and climatic conditions on the availability of water resources and the frequency of **wildfires**. The Landsat satellites have collected the largest archive of remotely sensed land data in the world, which informs **agriculture production** and our nation's response to and mitigation of natural hazards.
- Provides vital **geospatial and mapping data** used in economic development, environmental management, infrastructure projects, and scientific applications by states, federal agencies, and the private sector.

- Helps make decisions about the nation's energy future by assessing **mineral and energy resources** – including rare earth elements, coal, oil, unconventional natural gas, and geothermal. The USGS is the sole federal source of information on mineral potential, production, and consumption.

Few modern problems can be addressed by a single scientific discipline. The USGS has a unique capacity to deploy truly interdisciplinary teams of experts to gather data, conduct research, and develop integrated decision support tools that improve ecosystem management, ensure accurate assessments of our water quality and quantity, reduce risks from natural and human-induced hazards, deliver timely assessments of mineral and energy resources, and provide emergency responders with accurate geospatial data and maps.

The Society is appreciative of the strong bipartisan, bicameral support USGS has received from House and Senate appropriators over the years. We respectfully request that you continue this trend by providing **\$1.2 billion for the US Geological Survey for Fiscal Year 2018** and **rejecting proposed cuts to the agency's FY 2017 funding**.