

USGS R&D Falls in House Plan

(This analysis is part of a series of AAAS R&D Funding Updates on the FY 2001 congressional appropriations process. This analysis includes information on R&D in House appropriations for Interior. The complete series of AAAS R&D Funding Updates, including continually updated analyses of R&D by agency in FY 2001 appropriations, is available on the AAAS R&D Web Site (<http://www.aaas.org/spp/R&D>) in the “FY 2001 R&D” or the “What’s New” sections.)

Before a week-long Memorial Day recess, the House Appropriations Committee approved its FY 2001 Interior appropriations bill, which provides funding for R&D in the Department of the Interior. The bill goes to the House floor in June. The House bill would provide \$550 million for Interior R&D, a drop of 4.0 percent or \$23 million from FY 2000 because of restrictive spending targets for the overall bill. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) requested a 7 percent increase for its R&D programs, but the House would allocate a small 0.6 percent cut to \$499 million.

The House Interior bill received a small allocation of funds early on in the appropriations process, and the committee was unable to give increases to most of its programs. The Interior bill totals \$15.0 billion, barely above the FY 2000 total and \$1.4 billion below the President’s request for its programs. In addition to the Department of the Interior, the bill also funds the Forest Service, several programs in the Department of Energy, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Endowment for the Arts, and other small agencies. Most accounts would receive funding equal to or slightly below the FY 2000 level.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the primary sponsor of R&D in Interior. Its total House appropriation is \$817 million, \$79 million less than the request and just \$3 million or 0.4 percent above FY 2000 (see Table). The President’s request singled out USGS as a high priority in the Interior budget and asked for a nearly 10 percent increase for the USGS budget and a 7.3 percent increase for R&D, which accounts for nearly two-thirds of the USGS budget. USGS R&D would total \$499 million, 0.6 percent below FY 2000.

The request proposed to boost the USGS budget especially in the areas of geographic and biological research, with a focus on improving USGS contributions to the science needs of Interior’s land and resource management bureaus, but because of a lack of funds the House would keep most accounts flat or slightly declining from FY 2000 levels. Only the national mapping R&D program would receive an increase of \$6 million to \$29 million, mostly because of a proposed shift from non-R&D activities to R&D within a flat total mapping budget. R&D in the other USGS bureaus would decline although there is little disagreement in the House bill with USGS priorities for its portfolio of programs, and in fact the bill agrees strongly with USGS’ effort to better meet the science needs of Interior’s resource managers.

USGS is one of the leading federal sponsors of earth sciences research, along with the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Within the earth sciences, USGS is particularly important in geological hazards research, including research on earthquakes and volcanoes. USGS is also a leading sponsor of water resources research and biological research, both of which would decline in the House bill. Most of this research is conducted within Interior labs to address the science needs of Interior’s other agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

If the House funding levels for R&D are enacted, Interior’s R&D would fall again in inflation-adjusted terms. Interior’s R&D has declined sharply since FY 1994, primarily because of the elimination of the Bureau of Mines in FY 1996 and the merging of the National Biological Service into USGS, but also because of a

gradual erosion in purchasing power due to several years of budget cuts beginning in the mid-1990s. The FY 2001 House funding level would be nearly a third below the peak FY 1994 funding level.

The Interior bill now moves to the House floor, but it is expected to draw a veto threat from President Clinton because it falls so far short of his proposed funding levels.

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**Table. Department of the Interior
House Appropriations Committee Action on R&D in the FY 2001 Budget
(budget authority in millions of dollars)**

	FY 2000 Estimate	FY 2001 Request	Action by House				
			FY 2001 House	Chg. from Request Amount	Chg. from Request Percent	Chg. from FY 2000 Amount	Chg. from FY 2000 Percent
U.S. Geological Survey:							
Surveys, Investigations, and Research (SIR):							
National Mapping	23	38	29	-9	-23.4%	6	26.9%
Geologic Resources	211	218	208	-10	-4.5%	-3	-1.5%
Water Resources	131	132	125	-7	-5.0%	-5	-4.2%
Biological Research	137	151	137	-14	-9.4%	0	-0.2%
Total USGS R&D	502	539	499	-40	-7.3%	-3	-0.6%
<i>(USGS Non-R&D SIR Activities)</i>	<i>312</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>318</i>	<i>-39</i>	<i>-11.0%</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2.0%</i>
<i>(Total USGS SIR Budget)</i>	<i>813</i>	<i>895</i>	<i>817</i>	<i>-79</i>	<i>-8.8%</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.4%</i>
Bureau of Reclamation	5	6	6	0	0.0%	1	20.0%
National Park Service	31	31	31	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bureau of Land Management	3	3	3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Minerals Management Service	32	11	11	0	0.0%	-21	-65.6%
Total Interior R&D	573	590	550	-40	-6.7%	-23	-4.0%

AAAS estimates based on FY 2001 appropriations bills. Includes conduct of R&D and R&D facilities.
FY 2000 and FY 2001 request figures based on OMB R&D data and supplemental agency budget data.
Figures are rounded to the nearest million. Changes calculated from unrounded figures.

**June 2, 2000 - House Appropriations Committee-approved funding levels.
These appropriations may be amended or rejected on the House floor.**