

USGS R&D Climbs in House Plan

AAAS R&D Funding Update on Interior R&D in FY 2008 House Appropriations

Highlights

- **R&D in Interior's lead science agency, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), would climb 6.6 percent or \$37 million to \$602 million in the latest House appropriation for 2008, in contrast to a requested cut (see Table).**

- In addition to restoring funding to requested cuts in mineral resources R&D and water R&D programs, the House would add \$10 million in new money for USGS climate change research.

- R&D in the Department of the Interior would gain 6.9 percent to \$678 million, reversing a downward trend in Interior R&D funding for six of the last seven years.

USGS R&D in FY 2008 House Appropriations

On June 7, the House Appropriations Committee approved its version of the FY 2008 Interior-Environment appropriations bill (HR 2643) providing funding for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other natural resources and environment programs. The full House is expected to debate and approve the bill the week of June 11. The House bill contains nearly \$28 billion in 2008 discretionary spending, \$1.2 billion more than the current year but nearly \$2 billion more than the President's request for a cut in these programs.

The Department of the Interior manages most of the publicly owned lands in the United States, from the national park system to Indian lands to publicly owned mines. R&D to support Interior's land management responsibilities would total \$678 million in the House's appropriation for FY 2008, like the overall Interior bill an increase over 2007 (up 6.9 percent) in contrast to a requested cut (see Table).

The **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** is the primary sponsor of R&D in Interior. USGS is one of the leading federal sponsors of earth sciences research, along with the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation (NSF), 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. While the FY 2008 budget proposes substantial increases for key physical sciences research programs, the President's budget proposes \$975 million for the earth sciences-oriented USGS budget, a cut of \$13 million from the 2007 level after adjusting for emergency appropriations enacted at the end of May. But the House would add \$58 million to the request for a total USGS budget exceeding \$1.0 billion (see Table).

USGS R&D totals \$602 million in the FY 2008 House appropriation, an increase of \$37 million or 6.6 percent instead of a requested cut (see Table). Just over half of the USGS budget is devoted to R&D activities, with the remainder going for science support, data gathering and dissemination, facilities operations, mapping, and natural hazards reduction. **R&D funding would increase in all four USGS research divisions instead of requested cuts for three out of four, and the House would also add \$10 million in new funding for climate change research.** (For details of the FY 2008 request for Interior R&D, see Chapter 12 of *AAAS Report XXXII: R&D FY 2008* or the March 7 AAAS R&D Funding Update on Interior R&D.)

The Geologic Hazards, Resources, and Processes Division would see its R&D funding increase 5.0 percent in the House instead of falling by 7 percent, in a repeat of an annual ritual in which USGS proposes to cut the mineral resources program nearly in half but the House intervenes to keep funding at current levels. As in past years, the House Interior bill strongly disagrees with USGS' rationale that minerals research could be funded by the private sector, and reaffirms the federal role in minerals research with restored funding of \$52 million instead of the \$30 million request. In another earth sciences-related division, Geographic Research would increase \$3 million to \$47 million in the House plan.

Water Resources R&D would increase \$2 million to \$128 million in the House plan instead of a requested cut. USGS puts forward its perennial proposal to eliminate federal funding for the water resources research institutes for a savings of \$5 million, but as in past years the House would reject the proposal and would preserve the federal role in these cooperatively funded institutes, at a funding level of \$6 million in 2008. The Cooperative Water Program would decline slightly to \$63 million. This program supports the collection of basic hydrologic data, studies of specific water-resources problems, and hydrologic research through USGS partnerships with state governments and other entities. There would be a slight increase for the National Water Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA) to \$65 million; NAWQA is charged with monitoring the nation's water quality, and its data are used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and many state regulatory agencies. The remaining water portfolio would mostly stay flat. USGS biological research programs would increase \$11 million to \$187 million.

The House would add \$10 million to the USGS budget specifically for climate change research (see Table) for "vital research efforts of Survey scientists related to various aspects of global climate change," according to report language accompanying the Interior bill. Although details are sketchy, the funds would presumably be distributed among the four USGS research divisions.

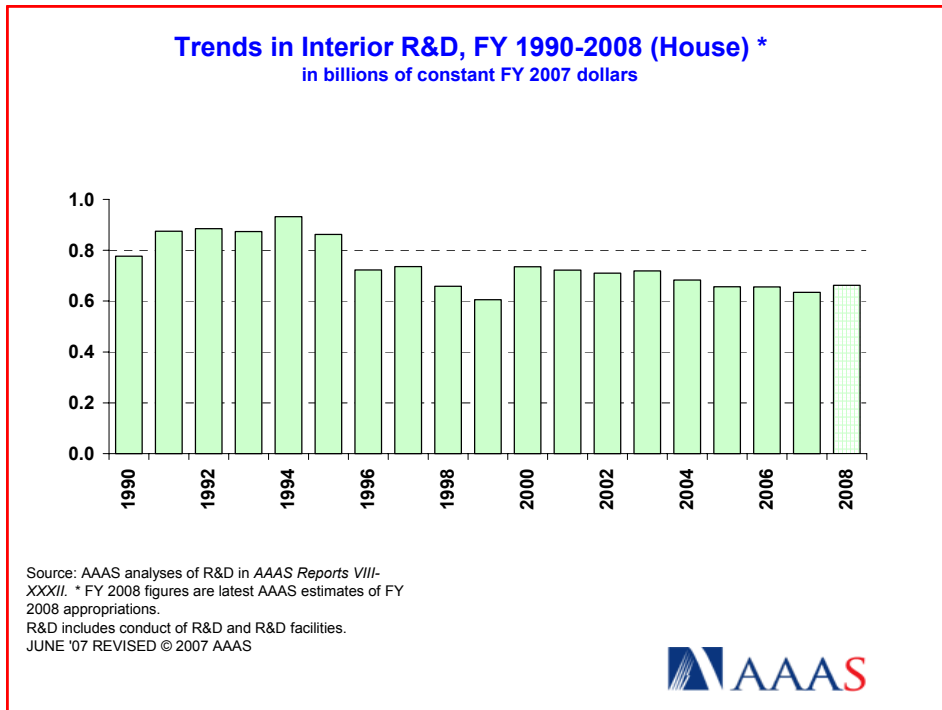


Figure 1. (click on the image for PDF)

Other Interior Agencies

Although USGS is the primary science agency in Interior, four other Interior bureaus also fund R&D (see Table). These include funds for minerals and mining research in the Minerals and Management Service (MMS), wildfire prevention research in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), water resources research

in the Bureau of Reclamation, and R&D for the Florida Everglades restoration and other park-related projects in the National Park Service. R&D funding for all four agencies would increase in the House bill.

Impacts of the FY 2008 Interior Budget

Although physical sciences research would be a high priority in the FY 2008 budget request, environmental research funding would decline along with other domestic programs. **But House appropriators have already signaled that environmental science will be a key priority, especially in the area of climate change, and that they will try to reverse recent budget trends.** The FY 2008 increase for Interior R&D in the House appropriation would be a small break from recent trends, in which Interior R&D has declined in real terms for six of the last seven years (see Figure 1). Interior 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 former National Biological Service into USGS in the mid-1990s. After a large increase in FY 2000, Interior R&D has been mostly flat since then, resulting in steady losses after adjusting for inflation. 84 percent of Interior's R&D is performed in-house, with only 8 percent performed at universities and colleges. Industries, state governments, and nonprofits combined perform the remaining 8 percent of Interior R&D.

Outlook and Next Steps

The full House is expected to debate and approve the Interior-Environment bill within the next week; although many amendments are expected and several will be approved, they are unlikely to affect the R&D totals significantly. The Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to mark up its version of the bill by mid-July. Congress will try to send a final version of the bill to President Bush before the October 1 start of FY 2008. The President has threatened to veto any 2008 appropriations bill that exceeds his request, as the House version does by \$2 billion, so the bill may have a long way to go before its funding levels become final.

(This analysis is one of a series of AAAS R&D Funding Updates on FY 2008 congressional appropriations. The complete series of AAAS R&D Funding Updates, including continually updated analyses of R&D in FY 2008 appropriations, is available on the AAAS R&D Web Site (<http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd>) in the "FY 2008 R&D" or the "What's New" sections.)

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Table. Dept. of the Interior R&D in FY 2008 House Appropriations

**Table. Department of the Interior
House Appropriations Committee Action on R&D in the FY 2008 Budget
(budget authority in millions of dollars)**

	FY 2007 Estimate	FY 2008 Request	Action by House				
			FY 2008 House	Chg. from Request		Chg. from FY 2007	
				Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
U.S. Geological Survey:							
Surveys, Investigations, and Research (SIR):							
Geographic Research	44	42	47	4	10.4%	3	5.9%
Geologic Hazards, Resources	214	198	225	26	13.3%	11	5.0%
Water Resources	126	119	128	9	7.7%	2	1.6%
Biological Research	176	181	187	6	3.3%	11	6.3%
Climate Change Research 1/	0	0	10	10	--	10	--
Enterprise Information	5	7	6	-1	-13.5%	1	18.9%
Total USGS R&D	564	547	602	55	10.0%	37	6.6%
<i>(USGS Non-R&D SIR Activities)</i>	<i>424</i>	<i>428</i>	<i>431</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1.8%</i>
<i>(Total USGS SIR Budget)</i>	<i>988</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>1,033</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>5.9%</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>4.5%</i>
Bureau of Reclamation	13	13	13	0	2.9%	0	2.9%
National Park Service	19	20	20	0	0.0%	1	5.3%
Bureau of Land Management	12	12	14	2	16.7%	2	16.7%
Minerals Management Service	26	29	29	0	0.0%	3	11.5%
Total Interior R&D	634	621	678	57	9.2%	44	6.9%

AAAS estimates based on FY 2008 appropriations bills. Includes conduct of R&D and R&D facilities.

FY 2007 and FY 2008 request figures based on OMB R&D data and supplemental agency budget data.

FY 2007 figures include 2007 supplemental appropriations enacted in Public Law 110-28.

Figures are rounded to the nearest million. Changes calculated from unrounded figures.

1/ The FY 2008 House Interior-Environment bill proposes \$10 million in new funding for USGS climate change research.

June 13, 2007 - AAAS estimates of House Appropriations Committee action.

These figures may be modified or rejected by the full House.