



Senate Increases USGS R&D

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

Highlights

- R&D in Interior's lead science agency, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), would increase 3.0 percent or \$17 million to \$581 million in the latest Senate plan for 2008, less than the House appropriation but well above a requested cut (see Table).

- The House and Senate are united in restoring funding to requested cuts in mineral resources R&D and water R&D programs, but the Senate would decline to join the House in adding \$10 million in new money for USGS climate change research.

- R&D in the Department of the Interior would gain 3.7 percent to \$658 million in the Senate, reversing a downward trend in Interior R&D funding for six of the last seven years.

USGS R&D in FY 2008 Senate Appropriations

On June 21, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the FY 2008 Interior-Environment appropriations bill (S 1696) providing funding for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other natural resources and environment programs, for consideration by the full Senate in July. The House debated and approved its version on June 27. Both the House and Senate bills contain more than \$27 billion in 2008 discretionary spending, \$1 billion more than the current year but nearly \$2 billion more than the President's requested cut for 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 \$658 million in the Senate appropriation for FY 2008, like the overall Interior bill an increase over 2007 (up 3.7 percent) in contrast to a requested cut (see Table). The House would provide \$20 million more than the Senate for Interior R&D. (For details of House appropriations for Interior R&D, see the June 13 AAAS R&D Funding Update. 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.)

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. 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, and the Senate would add \$35 million to the request to also top \$1 billion (see Table).

USGS R&D totals \$581 million in the FY 2008 Senate appropriation, an increase of \$17 million or 3.0 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. Although the House would provide \$20 million more than the Senate for USGS R&D, the House and Senate are in agreement that **R&D funding would**

increase in all four USGS research divisions, while the House is so far going it alone in adding \$10 million in new funding for climate change research.

The Geologic Hazards, Resources, and Processes Division would see its R&D funding increase 2.6 percent in the Senate 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 both the House and Senate intervene to keep funding at current levels. As in past years, both the House and now the Senate strongly disagree with USGS' rationale that minerals research could be funded by the private sector, and both reaffirm 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 \$2 million to \$46 million in the Senate plan.

Water Resources R&D would increase \$2 million to \$128 million in both the House and the Senate instead of a requested cut. USGS put 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 both chambers of Congress 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 stay at \$64 million instead of a requested cut. 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. USGS biological research programs would increase \$6 million to \$182 million.

The House, but not the Senate, 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.

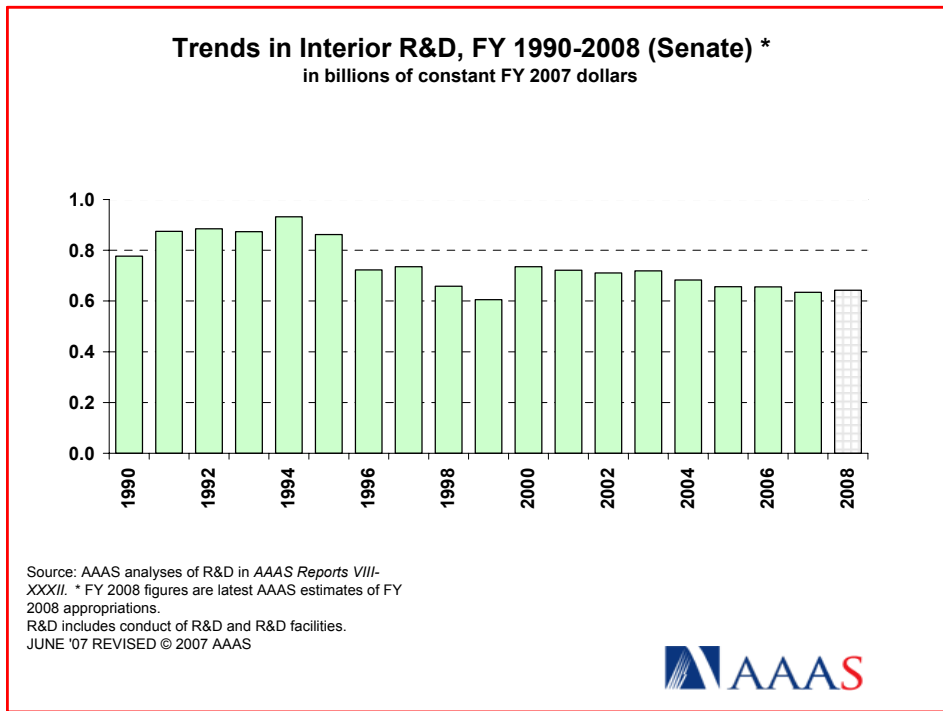


Figure 1. (click on the image for PDF)

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 and Senate plans.

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 and Senate appropriators have 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 and now the Senate 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 Senate is expected to debate and approve the Interior-Environment bill in July, following on the full House's approval of its version on June 27. 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 both versions do by nearly \$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 Senate Appropriations

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

	FY 2007 Estimate	FY 2008 Request	FY 2008 House	Action by Senate				
				FY 2008 Senate	Chg. from Request Amount	Chg. from Request Percent	Chg. from FY 2007 Amount	Chg. from FY 2007 Percent
U.S. Geological Survey:								
Surveys, Investigations, and Research (SIR):								
Geographic Research	44	42	47	46	4	9.7%	2	5.3%
Geologic Hazards, Resources	214	198	225	219	21	10.7%	6	2.6%
Water Resources	126	119	128	128	9	7.7%	2	1.6%
Biological Research	176	181	187	182	1	0.6%	6	3.5%
Climate Change Research 1/	0	0	10	0	0	--	0	--
Enterprise Information	5	7	6	6	-1	-13.5%	1	18.9%
Total USGS R&D	564	547	602	581	35	6.3%	17	3.0%
<i>(USGS Non-R&D SIR Activities)</i>	<i>424</i>	<i>428</i>	<i>431</i>	<i>429</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1.2%</i>
<i>(Total USGS SIR Budget)</i>	<i>988</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>1033</i>	<i>1,010</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>3.6%</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>2.2%</i>
Bureau of Reclamation 2/	13	13	13	13	0	2.9%	0	2.9%
National Park Service	19	20	20	20	0	0.0%	1	5.3%
Bureau of Land Management	12	12	14	14	2	16.7%	2	16.7%
Minerals Management Service	26	29	29	29	0	0.0%	3	11.5%
Total Interior R&D	634	621	678	658	37	6.0%	23	3.7%

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.

2/ Funded in the Energy-Water bill, which has not yet been drafted by the Senate. FY 2008 Senate figure is the FY 2008 request.

June 28, 2007 - AAAS estimates of Senate Appropriations Committee action.

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