

USGS R&D Rises by 7 Percent in Final Interior Budget

(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 the House-Senate conference report for Interior appropriations. 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.)

On September 29, Congress released the conference report (final version) of the Interior FY 2001 appropriations bill (HR 4578), which provides funding for R&D in the Department of the Interior. [President Clinton signed the bill into law on October 11.] The Interior bill **provides \$591 million for Interior R&D, \$18 million or 3.2 percent more than the FY 1999 funding level** and nearly even with the President’s request (see Table).

The **U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)** is the primary sponsor of R&D in Interior. Its total FY 2001 appropriation (including \$23 million in emergency appropriations for land conservation and related activities) is \$885 million, a substantial 8.8 percent increase over FY 2000 that nearly matches the President’s request for \$895 million (see Table). Nearly two-thirds of the USGS budget is for R&D activities. **USGS R&D rises by 7.0 percent for a total of \$537 million.** Interior proposed an expansion of USGS R&D activities in the FY 2001 budget request, and although earlier House and Senate appropriations had trimmed the request considerably, the final Interior bill grants nearly the entire request and allows for increases in R&D funding by all four USGS divisions. (For information on House appropriations for Interior R&D, please see the June 2 R&D Funding Update; for information on Senate appropriations, please see the June 27 R&D Funding Update.)

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. The earth sciences program in USGS receives a 2.9 percent increase over the comparable amount in FY 2000 for a total of \$217 million. USGS is also a leading sponsor of water resources research, which receives a small 1.6 percent increase to \$133 million, and biological research, which jumps substantially by 14.4 percent to \$157 million. 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. USGS proposed a dramatic expansion of R&D in the National Mapping Division, and although the final Interior bill trims the request mapping R&D still rises by 31.3 percent to \$30 million in FY 2001.

Other Interior bureaus also fund some R&D, including the National Park Service (\$31 million, the same as FY 2000) on topics including Everglades restoration, and the Minerals Management Service (\$13 million, down considerably from \$32 million).

The FY 2001 increase enables Interior R&D to stay just ahead of inflation. 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 National Biological Service into USGS. Since then, Interior R&D has been flat, and the small FY 2001 increase would continue this trend.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Interior's research portfolio (excluding development and R&D facilities) by discipline, most of it funded by USGS. USGS work in earth sciences and water resources falls under the environmental sciences category, which accounts for two-thirds of Interior's research. Biological research in USGS is classified under life sciences, which accounts for a quarter of the Interior portfolio.

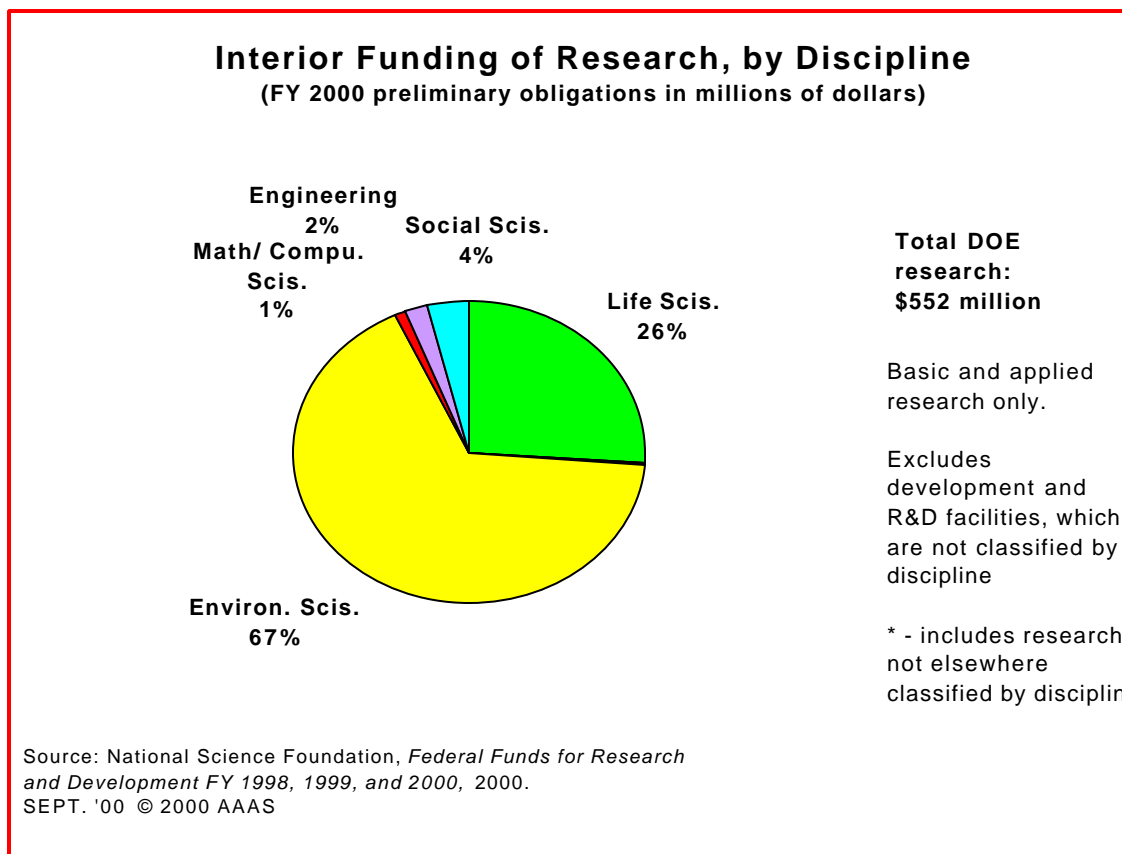
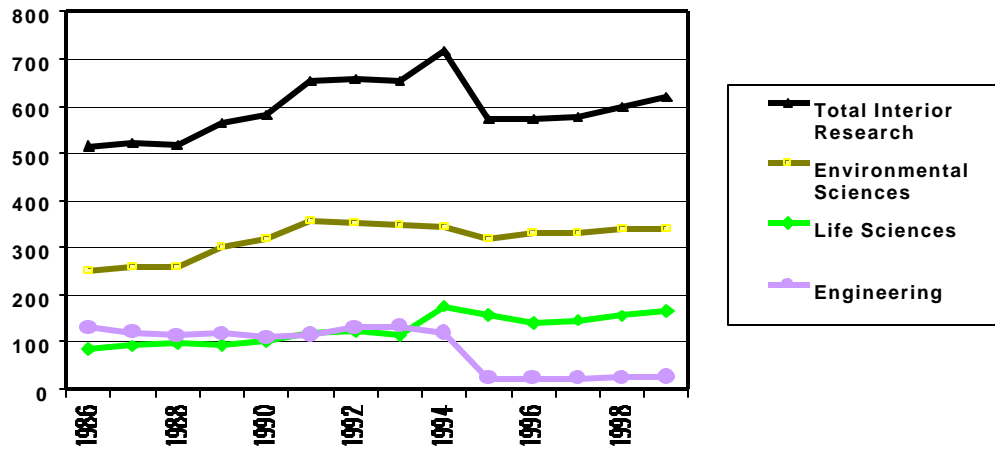


Figure 1.

Interior support for research has followed trends in Interior R&D, because nearly all of Interior's R&D portfolio is research. As shown in Figure 2, Interior support of research has declined since FY 1994 in real terms. The most prominent drop is in engineering research, which was almost entirely eliminated with the closure of the Bureau of Mines. Life sciences research increased with the creation of the National Biological Service, but small cuts in subsequent years have eroded support. Increases for USGS biological research in FY 2000 and FY 2001, however, should bring life sciences support close to peak funding levels. Interior support for environmental sciences research has fared better than other disciplines and has remained steady over the years, but over the past decade the trend is downward as inflation eats away at purchasing power.

Although FY 2001 began on October 1, most FY 2001 appropriations remain unfinished. Interior's budget has at least emerged from House-Senate conference, which places it ahead of most of the other nondefense R&D agencies whose budgets are still in conference. [President Clinton signed the bill into law on October 11, making the bill the first of the nondefense spending bills to be signed into law.] He had objected to earlier versions of the bill because of cuts to his funding priorities, but in last-minute negotiations congressional appropriators sprinkled additional funds throughout the bill, and also included billions in emergency funding for land conservation and land acquisition activities, a key priority for the President.

**Dept. of the Interior Research
by Selected Disciplines, FY 1986-1999**
(millions of constant FY 2000 dollars obligations)



Source: National Science Foundation, SRS, *Federal Funds for Research and Development Historical Tables 1970-1999*, 2000. Basic and applied research only. Development and R&D facilities are not classified by discipline. SEPT. '00 © 2000 AAAS

Figure 2.

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AAAS R&D Budget and Policy Program
1200 New York Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 326-6607; -6600
science_policy@aaas.org
www.aaas.org/spp/R&D

**Table. Department of the Interior
House-Senate Conference on R&D in the FY 2001 Budget
(budget authority in millions of dollars)**

	FY 2000 Estimate	FY 2001 Request	House-Senate Conference				
			FY 2001 CONF.	Chg. from Request		Chg. from FY 2000	
				Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
U.S. Geological Survey:							
Surveys, Investigations, and Research (SIR):							
National Mapping	23	38	30	-8	-20.7%	7	31.3%
Geologic Resources	211	218	217	0	-0.2%	6	2.9%
Water Resources	131	132	133	1	0.7%	2	1.6%
Biological Research	137	151	157	6	3.8%	20	14.4%
Total USGS R&D	502	539	537	-2	-0.3%	35	7.0%
<i>(USGS Non-R&D SIR Activities)</i>	<i>312</i>	<i>357</i>	<i>348</i>	<i>-9</i>	<i>-2.6%</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>11.6%</i>
<i>(Total USGS SIR Budget)</i>	<i>813</i>	<i>895</i>	<i>885</i>	<i>-11</i>	<i>-1.2%</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>8.8%</i>
Bureau of Reclamation	5	6	7	1	16.7%	2	40.0%
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	13	2	18.2%	-19	-59.4%
Total Interior R&D	573	590	591	1	0.3%	18	3.2%

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.

FY 2001 Conference figures include emergency supplemental appropriations.

October 3, 2000 - House-Senate conference funding levels.

These funding levels are FINAL unless the bill is vetoed, or rescissions/supplementals are enacted in later appropriations bills.