

House Approves Flat Funding for USGS R&D

Highlights

- **The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) would see virtually no change in its R&D budget for FY 2005 in the House Interior appropriations bill.** The House would provide \$548 million for USGS R&D in FY 2005, just \$1 million more than this year.

- **The House would reverse many of the Bush Administration's proposed cuts to geology and water research programs, but all four USGS divisions would see their R&D funding essentially unchanged from this year's level.**

- Total Interior R&D would fall slightly to \$671 million in the House plan.

House FY 2005 Appropriations for USGS R&D

On June 17, the House of Representatives kicked off the FY 2005 appropriations process by debating and approving the Interior appropriations bill (HR 4568), the first of the 13 appropriations bills to make it through the House. The bill funds most of the Department of the Interior as well as the Smithsonian Institution and parts of the Departments of Energy and Agriculture. **The House Interior bill would provide \$671 million for Interior R&D in FY 2005**, a cut of \$4 million or 0.6 percent below FY 2004. Although the President's FY 2005 request would have cut R&D in Interior's U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) by 4.0 percent, the House bill would restore funding to the proposed cuts and provide a tiny \$1 million increase instead (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, 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. Nearly 90 percent 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. The House would provide \$944 million for the total USGS budget in FY 2005, \$25 million more than the request and \$7 million or 0.7 percent more than FY 2004 (see Table).

R&D accounts for nearly two-thirds of the USGS budget, with the remainder going to non-R&D activities such as environmental data collection, mapping, and natural hazards reduction. In a repeat of previous years, the Bush Administration requested a cut of 4.0 percent for USGS R&D, but the House would allocate \$548 million, a slight (0.2 percent) increase. (For details of the President's request for Interior R&D, please see Chapter 13 of *AAAS Report XXIX: R&D FY 2005*). The request proposed to cut funding for R&D in three USGS divisions (Geology, Water Resources, and Biological Research) and keep funding flat in the remaining division (Mapping). The House would provide enough funding to bring all four divisions' R&D programs approximately to their current-year funding levels.

Funding for nearly every USGS R&D program would stay flat or decline in FY 2005 under the House plan, even after the reversal of proposed cuts. Despite an additional \$8 million over the request, R&D in the Water Resources Division would still decline slightly to \$128 million. Funding for the **Toxic Substances Hydrology Program** would decline from \$14.9 million down to \$12.7 million. The program is a collaborative effort of USGS scientists, university and private-sector researchers, and state, local, and other federal agency scientists to conduct long-term research on water resource contamination in surface and groundwater environments. The House would reject the Administration's proposal to eliminate the

water resources research institutes program, but the \$6.5 million FY 2005 funding level would be just barely above this year's level. The House appropriation of \$15.7 million for the hydrologic research and development program would be more than the request, but well below \$17.1 million for this year. The House would keep **the National Water Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA)** at \$63 million, down slightly from this year. 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 Biological Resource Division (BRD) would receive \$176 million in FY 2005, a slight gain of \$2 million.

R&D in the Geologic Hazards, Resources, and Processes Division would stay even at \$210 million, an improvement from a proposed \$10 million cut falling disproportionately on the mineral resources R&D program. The House not only restores funding for mineral resources R&D but inserted strong language into the committee report calling mineral resources research a core responsibility of USGS. Funding for R&D on earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, geologic mapping, geology, and earth surface dynamics would stay flat or decline slightly. Mapping and Geography R&D would barely increase to \$34 million.

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 project in the National Park Service. The House would go along with the President's request for these R&D programs.

The House bill, however, expresses concern about the progress of Everglades research funded jointly by USGS and the National Park Service, and chastises Interior for delivering an Everglades science plan a year late this April and for doing too little to coordinate various Everglades research programs or to link science with restoration and management decisions. The House bill would require Interior to submit a report by November providing details of research projects, how they fit into the overall Everglades science plan, and how research results might inform restoration and management.

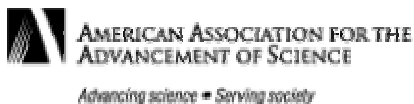
Next Steps

The House Interior bill now awaits a companion bill from the Senate, but it may be July before the Senate takes up its Interior appropriations bill. Working with a nearly identical total, it will be difficult for the Senate to be more generous than the House toward USGS.

Even the flat funding in the House and the request may look good compared with what lies in store. The FY 2005 budget contains preliminary projections for the USGS budget out to FY 2009. **In FY 2006, the total USGS budget would fall even further to \$897 million** and end up well below this year's funding level at \$903 million by FY 2009. **After adjusting for expected inflation, the Bush budget would leave USGS R&D funding 13 percent below this year's funding level in 2009.**

(This analysis is one of a series of AAAS R&D Funding Updates on FY 2005 congressional appropriations. The complete series of AAAS R&D Funding Updates, including continually updated analyses of R&D in FY 2005 appropriations, is available on the AAAS R&D Web Site (<http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd>) in the "FY 2005 R&D" or the "What's New" sections.)

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**Table. Department of the Interior
House Action on R&D in the FY 2005 Budget
(budget authority in millions of dollars)**

	FY 2004 Estimate	FY 2005 Request	FY 2005 House	Action by House			
				Chg. from Request Amount	Chg. from Request Percent	Chg. from FY 2004 Amount	Chg. from FY 2004 Percent
U.S. Geological Survey:							
Surveys, Investigations, and Research (SIR):							
National Mapping	33	33	34	1	1.7%	1	1.7%
Geologic Resources	210	201	210	10	4.8%	0	0.0%
Water Resources	129	120	128	8	6.9%	-1	-0.8%
Biological Research	175	172	176	4	2.5%	2	0.9%
Total USGS R&D	547	525	548	23	4.3%	1	0.2%
<i>(USGS Non-R&D SIR Activities)</i>	391	394	396	2	0.5%	5	1.4%
<i>(Total USGS SIR Budget)</i>	938	920	944	25	2.7%	7	0.7%
Bureau of Reclamation *	16	10	10	0	0.0%	-6	-37.5%
National Park Service	33	33	33	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bureau of Land Management	49	52	52	0	0.0%	3	6.1%
Minerals Management Service	30	28	28	0	0.0%	-2	-6.7%
Total Interior R&D	675	648	671	23	3.5%	-4	-0.6%

AAAS estimates based on FY 2004 and FY 2005 appropriations bills. Includes conduct of R&D and R&D facilities.

FY 2004 and FY 2005 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.

USGS figures exclude effects of proposed Enterprise Information restructuring.

* Funded in the Energy-Water bill, which has not been drafted yet by the House. FY 2005 House figures assume R&D will be funded at the requested level.

June 17, 2004 - House-approved funding levels.

These figures reflect amendments approved on the House floor.