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Hello from Capitol Hill!

MAY / JUNE 2024

As spring comes to a close and summer begins, there has been a flurry of activity here on Capitol Hill. In this issue of our Public Policy Newsletter, you can find information on:

- The recent passage of essential legislation for natural hazards research via the Weather Act Reauthorization Act
- FY2025 Budget Requests for the USGS and NSF
- Statements and testimony submitted by GSA in support of the USGS FY2025 budget and a recently introduced wildfire research bill
- The upcoming Geosciences Congressional Visit Days!

As always, if you have questions on any of the information presented here, how to get engage with your policymakers, or if you have any information you would like to share in this newsletter, please reach out to our science policy office at sciencepolicy@geosociety.org.

Sincerely,

Josh Martin

GSA Science Policy Fellow

jmartin@geosociety.org

Opportunities for Engagement

Geosciences Congressional Visit Days 2024



Oriana Calagna outside of Rep. María Elvira Salazar (R-FL-27) at GEO-CVD 2023.

Looking for a way to engage with policy makers and share the importance of geoscience? Geoscience Congressional Visit Days (GEO-CVD) will take place in Washington, D.C., on 9–10* September. GEO-CVD is an annual event sponsored by the Geological Society of America in conjunction with other Earth science societies to increase the visibility of and support for the geosciences in Congress.

GEO-CVD participants will partake in a workshop that will offer a foundational understanding of science policy through a series of brief seminars and panels; networking opportunities; and resources for participants to develop messaging and materials for successful congressional visits. Participants in GEO-CVD have an opportunity to meet with Members of Congress and staff from key congressional offices and committees.

IMPORTANT
DATE
CHANGE!

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN
ATTENDING, APPLY BY 19 JULY!***

**Please note a change in dates from a
previous edition of the newsletter.*

**APPLY
NOW!**

GSA Supports Legislation on Wildfire Research



On 18 April, Senator Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) and Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) introduced the Regional Leadership in Wildland Fire Research Act (S.4191). This bill, if passed into law, would establish wildfire research centers at higher education institutions around the country to conduct research on wildland fire causes and mitigation strategies and develop a career pathway training program for others to continue wildfire research.

GSA President **Chuck Bailey** provided a statement of support for the bill, which was featured in **Senator Luján's press release** announcing the bill. More information, as well as the full text of the bill, can be found at the bottom of the press release.



Appropriations Testimony

GSA submitted written testimony to the House of Representatives and Senate Committees on Appropriations in support of the United States Geological Survey's Fiscal Year 2025 budget. The testimony requests a budget of \$1.85

billion for the USGS, underscoring the importance of the USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers, Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (EarthMRI), and 3D Elevation Program, and the continued development of the Energy and Minerals Research Facility.

Additionally, GSA joined the other member organizations of the USGS Coalition in submitting written testimony calling upon Congress to restore the \$42 million in cuts from the USGS's FY2024 enacted appropriations.



Recent Hearings on The Hill

Department of the Interior FY2025 Budget

On 1-2 May, 2024, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland testified before the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, respectively, to discuss the Department of the Interior's requested FY2025 budget request, totaling \$18 billion.



During the hearings, Sec. Haaland emphasized the importance of climate resilience through increases to the Wildland Fire Management programs, continued support of USGS partnerships throughout the Colorado River Basin to better understand the effects of drought on ecosystems and the economy, and a \$35 million increase to the administration's efforts in developing clean energy, including solar, wind, and geothermal projects.

National Science Foundation FY2025 Budget

On 16 May, Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan, Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) testified before the House Subcommittee on Research and Technology, discussing the NSF FY2025 budget request of \$10.2 billion. In his testimony, Dr. Panchanathan highlighted “**Building a Resilient Planet**” as one of NSF’s four strategic themes. Under this theme, the NSF budget request includes:

- \$897 million for the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) - a program to support research that enhances the Nation’s ability to understand and respond to global change
- \$500.5 million for Clean Energy Technology (CET) investments that support research towards a clean energy transition and the U.S. NetZero objectives

- \$69.5 million for greenhouse gas research
- \$15 million for the Focus On Recruiting Emerging Climate and Adaptation Scientists and Transformers (FORECAST) program, which seeks students from underrepresented communities in STEM to equip them with the skills necessary to succeed in climate resiliency research.



Legislative Updates



H.R. 6093 - Weather Act Reauthorization Act
Lead Sponsor: Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK-3)
29 Cosponsors

SUMMARY:

- This bill represents the first reauthorization of weather programs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) since 2017, modernizing these programs to improve severe weather forecasting through the implementation of tornado warning systems and improvement of hurricane forecasting.
- The bill includes bipartisan provisions from various standalone bills including vital natural hazards bills like The National Landslides Preparedness Act and The Tsunami Warning Research and Education Act. The National Landslides Preparedness Act reauthorizes the National Landslides Hazard Reduction Program through 2028 and supports the research and development to mitigate

the impact of landslides on communities. The Tsunami Warning Research and Education Act expands the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program to improve the timeliness and accuracy of tsunami forecasting and strengthen community resilience to tsunami impacts, and authorizes \$30 million to this program each year through FY2028.



STATUS: Passed in the House of Representatives on 30 April and sent to the Senate.



GEOHERMAL ENERGY BILLS

During a markup session on 16 April, the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources ordered four bills seeking to streamline geothermal energy regulations on public lands (H.R. 6482, H.R. 7370, H.R. 7409, and H.R. 7422) to be reported to the full House for a vote. For more information on these bills, please see the recent [Speaking of Geoscience blog post](#).

H.R.4824 - Carbon Sequestration Collaboration Act

Lead Sponsor: Rep. James Baird (R-IN-4)

Cosponsor: Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-18)

SUMMARY: The Carbon Sequestration Collaboration Act directs the Department of Energy to collaborate with other relevant agencies (including the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture) to establish a research initiative that will evaluate long- and short-term behavior of sequestered carbon and improve carbon sequestration methods. Proponents of the bill support the effort to mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration, while opponents have concerns over the uncertainties in long-term carbon storage and whether the high investment would be better served in other renewable energy technologies.



STATUS: Passed in the House of Representatives on 30 April and sent to the Senate.

H.R.2925 - Mining Regulatory Clarity Act of 2024

Lead Sponsor: Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV-2)

Cosponsor: Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AR-At Large)

SUMMARY: This bill establishes a process that would allow mining operations to occupy and establish infrastructure on public land regardless of whether mineral deposits have been discovered there. Proponents argue that the bill is a necessary step in developing a robust domestic supply chain for critical minerals that will be vital to meet consumer demand for electric vehicles and a clean energy transition. Opponents raise concerns over the environmental impact and land use in areas where valuable minerals are not yet proven to exist.



STATUS: Passed in the House of Representatives on 30 April and sent to the Senate.

OTHER LEGISLATION GSA IS TRACKING



H.R. 401 – American Science First Act

H.R. 752 Securing Semiconductor Supply Chains Act of 2023

S. 229 – Securing Semiconductor Supply Chains Act of 2023

H.R. 1535 – Eliminating Backlogs Act of 2023

S. 493 – Securing the Visa Waiver Program Act of 2023

S. 912 – Mining Schools Act of 2023

S. 979 – H-1B and L-1 Visa Reform Act of 2023
S. 1742 – Clean Energy Minerals Reform Act of 2023
S. 3606 - National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
Reauthorization Act of 2024
S. 3788 - A bill to reauthorize the National Landslide Preparedness
Act, and for other purposes

Geology and Public Policy Committee

- Monica Dix, *Chair*
- Maureen A. Muldoon, *Past Chair*
- Sylvia R. Nicovich, *Chair-elect, Rocky Mountain Section Representative*
- Christopher M. Bailey, *Council Liaison*
- Jansen A. Smith, *Geology and Society Division Representative*
- Eric Lane Schuemann, *North-Central Section Representative*
- Kenneth Belk Taylor, *Southeastern Section Representative*
- MaryAnn Love Malinconico, *Northeastern Section Representative*
- Nancy A. Van Wagoner, *Cordilleran Section Representative*
- Joe Gillman, *Association of American State Geologists Representative*
Robby Goldman, *Congressional Science Fellow*
- Hannah Palmer, *Immediate Past Congressional Science Fellow*
- Amanda Leane Labrado, *Past Past Congressional Science Fellow*
- Lauren Haygood, *Member-at-Large*

- Benjamin J. C. Laabs, *Member-at-Large*
- Kirk F. Townsend, *Member-at-Large*
- Mr. Shannon K. Vattikuti, *Member-at-Large*
- Elijah White Jr., *Member-at-Large*
- Kenneth Hurst Williams, *Member-at-Large*
- Danielle Nicole Woodring, *Member-at-Large*
- David Bruce, *Member-at-Large, Student*

GSA Staff

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- **Josh Martin**, *GSA Science Policy Fellow*
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- **Elizabeth Long**, *GSA Associate Director of DEI*



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