

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Appropriations Committee
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee
on Interior Environment, and Related Agencies
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Ecosystems Mission Area Support

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Chairwoman Murkowski, and Ranking Members Murray and Merkley:

Our science societies write in full support of the USGS Ecosystems Mission Area. We urge you to fully fund the Ecosystems Mission Area (EMA) at the same FY25 funding level in the FY26 federal budget for the agency to continue its critical work of maintaining our nation's natural resources, ensuring environmental health, and protecting public health.

The USGS plays a unique role within the Department of the Interior, conducting research across a broad array of scientific disciplines and providing data that informs responses to many of the nation's greatest challenges, including the EMA.

The USGS Ecosystem Mission Area is a leader in pragmatic, practical scientific research and tool development to support decisions on natural resources to the benefit of the public good. USGS Ecosystems Mission Area science and tools are used by important stakeholders to inform commercially and recreationally important fish, wildlife, and land management actions. USGS science helps partners assess and mitigate risks in areas such as harmful invasive species, wildlife diseases, and contaminants and ecosystem change. The USGS EMA safeguards communities and people, as well as economically important natural resources and infrastructure, through:

- Informing natural resource-related decisions that affect public safety and ecosystems in the face of disturbances (e.g., droughts, fire, sea level change, and changing temperatures), extreme events (e.g., hurricanes and avalanches), and long-term impacts of land use (e.g., agriculture and water management).
- Conducting science that assists government and industry efforts in maximizing energy production while minimizing impacts to lands and waters that sustain fish and wildlife.
- Informing federal, state, and private land managers to implement cost-effective management strategies that support productive lands for the public good.

- Providing the science and data that supports hunting and fishing, while informing species conservation to prevent the need for federal protections.
- Developing tools for early detection, rapid response, and exposure and fate assessment of impacts related to costly threats such as invasive species, wildlife diseases, toxins and contaminants that can impact public property, safety, and ecosystems.
- Advancing the understanding of the patterns, processes, and impacts (past, present, and future) of ecosystem change to improve projections of change under different management scenarios and strengthen the nation's ability to respond and adapt to stressors.

Few modern problems can be addressed by a single scientific discipline within the USGS. The Ecosystems Mission Area is critical to the nation and contributes to the capacity of the USGS to deploy truly interdisciplinary teams of experts to provide services to the nation to gather data, conduct research, and develop integrated decision support tools that improve ecosystem management, ensure accurate assessments of our water quality and quantity, reduce risks from natural and human-induced hazards, deliver timely assessments of mineral and energy resources, and provide emergency responders with accurate geospatial data and maps.

Respectfully, our organizations request the Ecosystems Mission Area in the FY26 federal budget remain fully funded at the FY25 federal budget level. We appreciate your leadership to steward the national lands and resources for the betterment of the nation. Please contact the Ecological Society of America's Director of Public Affairs Alison Mize with any questions (alison@esa.org).

Sincerely,

Ecological Society of America
 ACA: The Structural Science Society
 American Geophysical Union
 American Institute of Biological Sciences
 American Ornithological Society
 American Society for Microbiology
 American Society for Photogrammetry and
 Remote Sensing
 Ashland County Land & Water
 Conservation Department
 Association for Advancing Participatory
 Sciences
 Association of Ecosystem Research Centers
 Association of Field Ornithologists
 Botanic Gardens Conservation International
 U.S.
 Botanical Society of America
 Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society
 Cartography and Geographic Information
 Society
 Ecological Landscape Alliance

Entomological Society of America
 KentuckyView
 Lake Superior Collaborative
 Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society
 Mountain Lion Foundation
 National Wildlife Federation
 Natural Areas Association
 Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory
 Natural Science Collections Alliance
 Nevada Chapter of the Wildlife Society
 North American Banding Council
 North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society
 Northeast Regional Invasive Species &
 Climate Change (RISCC) Network
 Northern Neck Chapter of Virginia, National
 Audubon Society
 Northwest Regional Planning Commission
 Oregon State University
 Ornithological Council
 Pacific Seabird Group
 Paleontological Society

Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Native
Plant Society
Society for Conservation Biology North
America
Society for Freshwater Science
Society of Environmental Toxicology and
Chemistry of North America
Society of Nematologists
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
Society of Wetland Scientists
Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council
The Electrochemical Society
The Geological Society of America
The Water Collaborative of Greater New
Orleans
The Waterbird Society
The Wildlife Society
The Wildlife Society California North Coast
Chapter
The Wildlife Society, Forestry and Wildlife
Working Group
Tropical Audubon Society
University Consortium for Geographic
Information Science
Utah State University Ecology Center
Virginia Association for Environmental
Education
Virginia Native Plant Society
Virginia Wilderness Committee
Weed Science Society of America
Wilson Ornithological Society