

April 30, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
The Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20214

RE: Ecosystems Mission Area Support

Dear Secretary Burgum:

Our organizations 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 (ECS)
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 (UCGIS)
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

cc: Acting Director USGS Sarah Ryker; Acting Ecosystems Mission Associate
Director Paul Wagner; Chief Scientist David Applegate