

Coalition Support for the USGS Streamgage Program

FY2027 Appropriations – Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

March 16, 2026

Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chair
Senator Merkley, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley:

On behalf of our nationwide coalition of water managers, utilities, states, local governments, and other water-dependent stakeholders, we respectfully request your continued support for adequate funding of the **U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Federal Priority Streamgage (FPS) Network and Cooperative Matching Funds (CMF) Program** in the FY2027 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Our organizations rely on USGS streamgage data to protect public safety, operate and maintain critical infrastructure, respond to floods and droughts, forecast water supplies, support hydropower and navigation and sustain regional and national economic activity. **Any funding shortfalls will greatly hinder our capacity to safeguard life and property and to respond to increasingly severe hydrologic conditions.**

FY2027 Request

For FY2027, we urge Congress to appropriate:

- **\$34 million for the Federal Priority Streamgage Network**, reflecting a modest increase to account for inflation and rising operation and maintenance costs; and
- **\$33 million for the Cooperative Matching Funds (CMF) Program** to sustain cost-shared streamgages and partnerships with more than 1,500 state, tribal, regional and local partners nationwide.

Why This Funding Is Needed

After years of flat funding and rising costs, critical FPS sites continue to be discontinued, resulting in the permanent loss of long-term records that cannot be recreated. These records become more valuable over time as they capture an ever-widening range of conditions. Congress intended the FPS network to serve as a stable federal backbone under the SECURE Water Act of 2009. However, insufficient federal investment has increasingly shifted costs to state and local partners who are already under fiscal strain. As a result, more sites are at risk of closure.

USGS streamgage networks rely on skilled technicians, calibrated equipment, satellite communication, vehicles, support facilities, advanced software and standardized data systems. Funding for FPS and CMF supports these shared resources but flattened or reduced funding over time cut both the number of gages and USGS's ability to maintain the monitoring network.

At the same time, USGS faces significant staffing losses with approximately 25-30 percent of scientists and technicians who operate and maintain streamgages lost due to retirements and a hiring freeze. These staffing challenges, combined with limited funding for data hosting and delivery, quality assurance and technical support, threaten the reliability and continuity of the national streamgage network even as demand for streamgage data continues to grow.

Consequences of Inaction

Streamgage data are foundational to the planning, design, and operation of bridges, dams, reservoirs, water treatment facilities and hydropower infrastructure. They are also essential for flood forecasting, drought response, navigation safety, monitoring water quality and emergency management. Loss of streamgages increases costs, reduces predictive capability and heightens risks to communities and infrastructure nationwide.

Existing federal, state, regional, and local water supply projects rely on accurate and accessible streamgage data for effective operation and management. Reliable streamflow data are also increasingly critical for water supply planning, including groundwater recharge, aquifer storage and recovery and other strategies to maximize beneficial use of high-flow events. In addition to many other federal initiatives, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) depend on robust streamgage networks to balance flood risk reduction with water supply benefits.

Conclusion

Adequate FY2027 funding at the requested level for the Federal Priority Streamgage Network and Cooperative Matching Funds Program is essential to protect public safety, sustain critical infrastructure and preserve the long-term hydrologic record upon which the nation depends. With your leadership, Congress can ensure that USGS continues to fulfill its water resources mission and provide the data needed by communities across the country.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to provide additional information or answer any questions. For more background information about funding and the utility of the national streamflow information program from stakeholders' perspectives, visit ICWP's website: <https://icwp.org/streamgage-support/>.

Please contact any of us or Beth Callaway at the Interstate Council on Water Policy at: beth@icwp.org or (307) 772-1999.

CC:

Appropriations Subcommittee Members
Secretary of the Interior
Director, Office of Management and Budget
Director, US Geological Survey

Co-Signing Organizations

Organization	Name
Alabama Office of Water Resources	Tom Littlepage
American Fisheries Society	Jeff Kopaska
American Flood Coalition Action	Julie Seger
American Rivers	Leda Huta
American Society of Civil Engineers	Thomas W Smith
American Water Resources Assn.	Dresden Farrand
American Water Works Assn.	G. Tracy Mehan, III Ed, Gov't Affairs
American Whitewater	Mark Singleton, ED
America's Watershed Initiative	Kimberly A. Lutz
Assoc of American State Geologists	Jessica Moore
Assoc of Calif Water Agencies	Ian Lyle
Assoc of Clean Water Administrators	Shelly Lemon
Assoc of Fish & Wildlife Agencies	Kurt Thiede
Assoc of State Dam Safety Officials	Lori Spragens
Assoc of State Flood Plain Managers	Chad Berginnis
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies	Tom Dobbins
Association of State Dam Safety Officials	Cody Holt

Bear River Commission	Don Barnett
Big Hole Watershed Committee	Pedro Marques
Big Horn River Alliance	Anne Marie Emery
Calif Sportfishing Protection Alliance	Bill Jennings
Cascade Water Alliance	Melina Thung
CDM Smith	Timothy Feather
Cobb County Marietta Water Authority	Cole Blackwell
Colo Riv Basin Salinity Control Forum	Don Barnett
Colorado Lake & Reservoir Management Assn.	Suresh Niraula
Delaware River Basin Commission	Steve Tambini
Environmental Defense Fund	Steve Cochran
Fly Fishers International	Patrick Berry
Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society	Steve McMurray
Great Lakes Commission	Erika Jensen
Great Lakes Observing System	Jennifer Boehme
Hawaii Commission on Water Resource Management	Kaleo Manuel
Henry's Fork Foundation	Brandon Hoffner
Hoopa Tribal Land Management/Environmental Protection Agency	Ken Norton
Hydrological Services America	Peter Ward
Hydropower Reform Coalition	Nic Nelson
Idaho Rivers United	Greg McReynolds
Idaho Water Users Assoc	Paul Arrington
Interstate Comm Potomac River Basin	Michael Nardolilli
Interstate Council on Water Policy	Beth Callaway
Kansas Water Office	Connie Owen
Kansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission	Earnie Gilder
KISTERS No. America	Matt Ables
Madison River Foundation	Johnathan Malovich
Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District	Danny Johnson
Mile High Flood District	Colin Haggerty
Minnesota DNR	Katie Smith
Missouri DNR	Erin Fanning
Missouri River Flyfishers Chapter of Trout Unlimited	Tracy Wendt
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	Lindsey Krywaruchka
Montana DNRC	Anna Pakenham-Stevenson
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Bill Schenk
Montana Trout Unlimited	Clayton Elliott
Montana Watershed Coordination Council	Ethan Kunard
National Assoc of Flood & Stormwater Mgm't Agencies	Sunny Simpkins
National Assoc of Wetland Managers	Marla Stelk
National Assoc State Boating Law Admin	John Fetterman
National Audubon Society	Julie Hill-Gabriel
National Drought Mitigation Center	Mark Svoboda
National Ground Water Association	Terry Morse
National Hydrologic Warning Council	Robert Hartman

National Hydropower Association	Malcolm Woolf
National Society of Professional Surveyors	Tim Burch
National Water Resources Association	Greg Morrison
National Water Supply Alliance	Dave Mitamura
National Wildlife Federation	Abby Tinsley
Nebraska DNR	Thomas Riley
NEIWPC	Susan Sullivan
North American Lake Management Society	Julie Chambers
Ohio Riv Valley Water Sanitation Comm	Richard Harrison
Oklahoma Water Resources Board	Julie Cunningham
Oregon Water Resources Congress	April Snell
Phycological Society of America	Eric Linton
Red River Compact Commission	Sue Lowry
Red River Valley Association	Josh McClintock
Republican Riv Compact Administration	Thomas Riley
Rivers Alliance of Connecticut	Alicea Charamut
Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry	Tamar Hagopian Schlekat
Society of Wetland Scientists	Loretta Battaglia
Southeast Kansas Groundwater Management Dist 3	Mark Rude
Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission	Adam Ringia
Sun River Watershed Group	Tracy Wendt
Susquehanna River Basin Commission	Andrew Dehoff
Tacoma Water	Scott Dewhirst
The Nature Conservancy	Elizabeth Crow
Three Rivers QUEST	Rachel Spirnak
Tri-State Water Resource Coalition	Gail Melgren
Trout Unlimited	Kate Miller
University of Georgia River Basin Center	Sechindra Vallury/ Seth Wenger
Upper Colo River Commission	Chuck Collum
Upper Miss River Basin Assoc	Kirsten Wallace
Upper Missouri Watershed Alliance	Sherry Meador
Va. Dept. of Environmental Quality, Office of Water Supply	William Cloe
Washington St Water Resource Assoc	Tom Myrum
Water Environment Federation	Walter Marlowe
West Virginia Rivers Coalition	Angie Rosser
West Virginia Water Research Institute	Melissa O'Neal
Western Landowners Alliance	Leslie Allison
Western States Water Council	JD Strong
Wild Salmon Center	Jessica Helsley
WV Dept of Transportation-Division of Highways	Douglas Kirk
Wyoming State Engineer's Office	Brandon Gebhart
Wyoming Water Association	Andrew Strike
Wyoming Water Development Office	Jason Mead
Xylem Analytics North America	Randy Hadland
Yellowstone River Commission	Brandon Gebhart

