



How Can Congress Help?

The Potential for Comprehensive Landslide Policy

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American Geosciences Institute

- Federation of 49 professional, scientific societies
- AGI provides:
 - Information services
 - Education and outreach
 - Policy information
 - Workforce development
 - Publications
 - News and events

Different Groups, Different Roles

- Federal agencies (USGS, FEMA)
 - Limited, regulated contact with congressional offices
 - Represent the views of the current presidential administration
 - Can host informational briefings
- Nonprofits (AGI, AEG)
 - Open contact with congressional offices
 - Can host informational briefings
 - Can advocate
- Citizen scientists (You!)
 - Open contact with congressional offices
 - Can advocate

The Hazards Caucus Alliance
The Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists
The Association of American State Geologists
The American Society of Civil Engineers Geo-Institute



Finding Stable Ground: Using Science and Partnerships to Manage Landslide Hazards

Monday, June 23, 2014

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

1334 Longworth House Office Building

Landslides occur in every state and territory across the United States. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, landslides in the U.S. cause more than \$1 billion in damages and result in 25 to 50 deaths in a typical year. So far in 2014, landslides in Washington and Colorado have killed more than 40 people, and landslides in the mid-Atlantic region have displaced numerous families. This briefing will address landslide hazards across the U.S. and how advances in the geosciences, including breakthroughs in lidar technology, improved geologic mapping, and improved landslide susceptibility and risk assessments, can help inform decision making to save lives, property, and critical infrastructure.

Speakers

Dave Norman, State Geologist of Washington, Manager of the Department of Natural Resources, Manager of the Division of Geology and Earth Resources, Washington Geological Survey

Jennifer Bauer, Principal Geologist and co-owner of Appalachian Landslide Consultants, PLLC

Mike Chard, Director, Boulder Office of Emergency Management

Moderated by **Peter Lyttle**, U.S. Geological Survey

Please RSVP to Abby Seadler (aseadler@agiweb.org) by Monday, June 23

- HCA, AEG, AASG, and ASCE-GI held an educational, congressional briefing on June 23, 2014.
- Advances in the geosciences can help inform decision making
- Staff from 11 different congressional offices representing 9 different states attended, including WA, NM, AZ, LA, AK, CO, WI, and ID.

The “Ask”

- Competitive grant program that would allow state and local organizations to apply for funds to map local landslide hazards.
- Interagency program that would standardize and streamline efforts to reduce losses from landslide hazards currently spread across multiple federal agencies.

What is Congress's Role?

- Historical context for legislating disasters
 - Pre-1950: Piecemeal approach to funding disasters
 - Today: Amended Stafford Act (2013)
- Standardize procedures through legislation
 - National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
 - National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program
 - Tsunami Warning and Education Act

Obstacles and Barriers to Legislation

- Timing
- Turnover
- Perceived importance
- Legislative process
- Appropriations process

Obstacles and Barriers: The Legislative Process

- DOA
- In committee
- On the Floor
- In the other chamber
- By presidential veto
- By appropriation—or lack thereof...

Funding for Landslide Hazards

Account	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016 President's Request
Earthquake Hazards	57	56	53.8	50.8	53.8	59.5	58
Coastal and Marine Geology	46.2	44.7	42.8	40.3	41.3	40.3	45.2
Volcano Hazards	24.4	24.5	24.1	22.7	23.1	25.1	25.7
Global Siesmographic Network	5.8	5.4	5.2	4.9	4.9	4.9	9.8
Landslide Hazards	3.4	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.5	3.5	4
Geomagnetism	2.1	2.1	2	1.9	1.9	1.9	3.6

(millions of dollars, enacted)

Pathways Forward

- Hope in the 114th Congress
- Potential Congressional champions
 - Rep. Suzan Delbene (D-WA, 1st District)
 - Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO, 3rd District)
 - The Congressional Western Caucus
 - The Congressional Hazards Caucus

How You Can help!

- Visit a district office
- Call or send an email
 - House: firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov
 - Senate:
firstname_lastname@sen'slastname.senate.gov
- Come to Washington, D.C. for Geosciences Congressional Visits Days (GEO-CVD)!

Communicating with Congress

- Have a clear “Ask”
- Get community buy-in
- Relate your “Ask” back to the office
- Be brief
- Be patient, but follow up

Additional Resources

- Policy information for scientists
 - AGI Geoscience Policy Program
- Science information for decision makers
 - AGI Critical Issues Program

<http://www.americangeosciences.org/policy-critical-issues>

Thank you!

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