

# USGS Streamgauge Networks and Modernization: February 28th Coalition Letter to Congress Requesting Financial Support



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Two identical letters were submitted to:

- Congressman Jeff Merkley, Chair
- Congresswoman Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies

- Congressman Mike Simpson, Chair
- Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member

U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies

The February 28th letters were submitted by a coalition that supports USGS Streamgauge Networks and Modernization.

The coalition lists 96 members described as water management and use stakeholders.

The coalition includes:

- State agencies
- Interstate commissions
- Associations
- Universities
- Non-governmental organizations
- Private industry

The purpose of the letters is to seek Congressional support for funding the United States Geological Survey's Federal Priorities Streamgauge network along with supportive programs for upcoming Fiscal Year 2024 budget appropriation.

The rationale for the request is a belief that a fully funded streamgauge network (i.e., keeping pace with inflationary and routine maintenance overhead) is crucial to efforts to:

. . . understand, plan for, and build our collective capacity to improve the nation's resilience to extreme weather events.

The letters further argue that:

. . . Without water data from this widespread system of sites, we are less equipped to make informed decision making, such as flood and hurricane risk predictions, drought determinations, and water supply forecasts.

The letters identify what are described as network gaps identified by USGS as including:

- Most coastal watersheds (83 percent) do not have streamgages.
- Thirty-nine states lack streamflow information in areas to assess how local climate is affecting floods and droughts.
- The USGS network has streamgages in many areas where water supply is vulnerable to reduced snowpack because of climate warming but some of these areas may require additional gages because they are particularly vulnerable to changes in snowpack.

Funding requests include:

- \$32 million dedicated to Federal Priority Streamgages
- \$68 million for Cooperative Matching Funds Program (including \$33 million for streamgage support)
- \$35 million for Next Generation Water Observing System and data delivery modernization

A copy of the letters can be downloaded [here](#).