

*celebrating over 60 years of service to the geosciences*

January 22, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell,

The geosciences, including more than 200,000 professionals represented by our societies, are ready to help meet the challenges of modern life in a complex Earth system. Geoscientists deliver the knowledge, experience, and ingenuity to meet society's demands for natural resources, environmental quality and resilience from hazards. Meeting societal needs requires robust and sustained federal support for geosciences research and development; monitoring and observations, including space-based systems; and geosciences education and workforce development. Such support will accelerate innovation, enhance competitiveness, stimulate job growth, and ensure economic vitality in the United States.

We outline the critical needs of the nation and the world at the outset of the twenty first century and provide policy guidance in "Critical Needs for the Twenty First Century: The Role of the Geosciences" available at [www.agiweb.org/gap/criticalneeds](http://www.agiweb.org/gap/criticalneeds)

Humankind relies on natural resources derived from the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and lithosphere of the Earth system including:

- Energy
- Soils
- Ecology, such as forests, rangelands, highlands, wetlands, coastal systems, and the oceans
- Water
- Minerals, metals, and materials

With a burgeoning human population, rising demand for natural resources, and a changing climate, it is critical to integrate more fully Earth observations and Earth system understanding into actions for a sustainable world. The water-food-energy nexus is a global concern. Food production needs to double by 2050 to feed over 9 billion people while balancing increasing energy demands and dwindling fresh water supplies. All of this must be done while safeguarding people and infrastructure from natural hazards and dealing with the waste streams from resource consumption. Time and again the geosciences have met such demands with innovative solutions, essential efficiencies, and unheralded risk reductions.

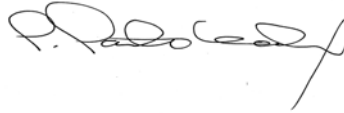
Members and staff of the signatory societies of this letter will be visiting policymakers in the coming months to discuss the role of the geosciences in serving society.

Please contact Dr. P. Patrick Leahy, Executive Director of the American Geological Institute at 703-379-2480, x202 or [pleahy@agiweb.org](mailto:pleahy@agiweb.org) for more information about the geosciences and how we can help.

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Below are the signatory societies of this letter.

Sincerely,



P. Patrick Leahy, Ph.D.

AASP-The Palynological Society  
American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG)  
American Geophysical Union (AGU)  
American Institute of Hydrology (AIH)  
American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG)  
American Rock Mechanics Association (ARMA)  
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO)  
Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG)  
Association of American State Geologists (AASG)  
Association of Earth Science Editors (AESE)  
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists (AEG)  
Clay Minerals Society (CMS)  
Council on Undergraduate Research, Geosciences Division (CUR)  
Environmental and Engineering Geophysical Society (EEGS)  
The Geochemical Society (GS)  
Geo-Institute of the American Society of Civil Engineers (GI)  
Geological Society of America (GSA)  
International Medical Geology Association (IMGA)  
Karst Waters Institute (KWI)

Mineralogical Society of America (MSA)  
National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists (NABGG)  
National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT)  
National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG)  
National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI)  
National Earth Science Teachers Association (NESTA)  
National Ground Water Association (NGWA)  
National Speleological Society (NSS)  
Paleontological Society (PS)  
Petroleum History Institute (PHI)  
Seismological Society of America (SSA)  
SEPM (Society for Sedimentary Geology) (SEPM)  
Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration, Inc. (SME)  
Society of Economic Geologists (SEG)  
Society of Exploration Geophysicists (SEG)  
Society of Independent Professional Earth Scientists (SIPES)  
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP)  
Soil Science Society of America (SSSA)  
United States Permafrost Association (USPA)