Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Legislative Hearing
H.R. 1675, H.R. 4033, Draft Geothermal bill, Draft Volcano bill
November 30, 2017

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for allowing me to occupy this position in Ranking Member Lowenthal's absence.

- It is a pleasure to be here today, and I look forward to discussing the four bills on the agenda. While the Subcommittee has considered and moved a number of contentious bills in recent months, I'm very pleased we're spending time this afternoon on these bipartisan, practical pieces of legislation.

- H.R. 4033, the National Geologic Mapping Act Reauthorization Act, is of particular interest and importance to me, as Congressman Lamborn and I introduced this bill together at the beginning of October.

- Our bill would reauthorize the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program - which is the primary source of funds for the production of geologic maps in the United States, for an additional five years.

- Even though most people are not familiar with geologic maps, it is hard to overstate their importance.

- Geologic maps are the bedrock that support a variety of industries, services, and activities that hold immense societal and economic value.

- Geologic maps are used to locate groundwater resources and evaluate groundwater quality – leading to better land and habitat management decisions.

- Geologic maps help city planners, emergency responders, and landowners assess how vulnerable an area is to sinkholes, landslides, earthquakes, floods and other deadly and destructive natural hazards.

- This is particularly relevant given some of the other bills on the agenda today, such as Ms. DelBene's legislation on landslides.

- Geologic maps enable the government and industry to locate and develop mineral resource used for a variety of scientific applications, in military technology, and in consumer products.

- Further, geologic maps provide valuable information that engineers and developers use when designing and constructing highways, bridges, tunnels, and other transportation assets.

- In my home state of Maryland, the value and importance of geologic maps are evident.

- Even through Maryland is a fairly small state by area, it has an incredible variety of landscapes and geology, stretching from the beaches of the Atlantic Coast to the Appalachian Mountains.

- This type of diversity in our geology demands a robust understanding of the science and an extensive mapping of underground formations.

- Thanks to the STATEMAP component of the Program, which awards competitive Federal grants that are matched by State funds, the Maryland Geological Survey has received over $2 million in funds for geologic mapping projects since 1999.

- This money has helped fund projects in Maryland including a 2013 mapping of geologic and karst features such as sinkholes, closed depressions, and springs in Washington County.

- On top of this, Maryland is home to several institutions that rely on the secondary and tertiary benefits of the USGS geologic mapping program.

- The NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Prince George's County, the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, and our military cyber operations in Fort Meade all reap the rewards of a nation that has broadened its knowledge and capabilities by investing in geological mapping.

- There’s no doubt the USGS mapping program is vital to our nation’s safety and prosperity.

- I’d like to offer special thanks to Congressman Lamborn for introducing H.R. 4033 with me, and to Chairman Gosar for holding this hearing.

- I thank the witnesses for being here, and I yield back the balance of my time.