

**Statement for the Record
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. Department of the Interior
before the
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
on H.R. 5066
September 17, 2014**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting the Department of the Interior to provide its views on H.R. 5066, the Data Preservation Act of 2014, to reauthorize the National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program through 2019.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 established the National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP) and outlined the following goals:

- Archive geological, geophysical, and engineering data, maps, well logs, and samples
- Provide a national catalog of archived materials and
- Provide technical and financial assistance to State geological surveys and relevant Department of the Interior bureaus for archived materials.

Through this partnership with the State geological surveys, the Department of the Interior plays a leading role in the Federal collection, management and preservation of geological and geophysical data.

Since 2007 the NGGDPP, administered by the U.S. Geological Survey, has provided 44 states with almost \$4.6M which, when matched by the states, amounts to over \$9M invested in the rescue and preservation of geoscience collections. These preserved data have been used in discoveries that have brought significant benefit to local and state economies. In addition, over 2.6M geoscience data records have been entered into the National Digital Catalog, an internet-accessible library describing the geologic collections located in Federal and State repositories.

There are numerous examples of Federal and State partnerships that we have funded via this program, and we would like to highlight three of those.

- In 2009, the Michigan Geological Survey received Program funds to prepare accurate inventories of rescued core from western Michigan. A search of this inventory by a potash company scientist revealed a large deposit of high grade potassium chloride, a critical ingredient in fertilizer. In September 2013, this deposit was estimated to be worth \$65B, and if mined, would create an estimated 300 jobs.
- Most of the characterization work for tar sand deposits in western Kentucky took place in the early 1900's, with a second brief round of interest after the 1974 Arab oil embargo.

Using funds from this program, the Kentucky Geological Survey was able to preserve these historical tar sand cores that had been slated for disposal. Inspection of samples in these cores by exploration geologists led to the initiation of a \$5M exploration program that culminated in a proven deposit in Kentucky.

- Lastly, preservation of geological and geophysical data and samples has proven invaluable in the continued research on the Bakken shale from the Williston Basin in North Dakota and Montana. The USGS Core Research Center in Denver houses core samples from this region. Over the last 10 years, these well-preserved cores have been accessed providing many private, academic and Federal research scientists with information key in the discovery and advancement of the existing and potential energy resources in the Williston Basin.

The Department of the Interior supports H.R. 5066, the Data Preservation Act of 2014, in order to provide continued funding for State and Federal partnerships ensuring the rescue and continued preservation of geological and geophysical samples and data. We thank Representative Benishek for introducing this legislation.

Preserving endangered geoscience collections is significantly more cost effective than recollecting these samples and data. Properly housing, inventorying and curating these collections, as we have identified for you today, provides an invaluable resource that underpins a wide variety of research, which can lead to important discoveries, new jobs and a stronger economy.

Mr. Chairman, again, we thank you for this opportunity. We will be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.