

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 10, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rodgers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-305, the Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment  
and Related Agencies  
B-308 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment  
and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Calvert and Ranking Members Lowey and McCollum,

I write to respectfully request that you provide the highest possible funding for landslide mitigation programs, including the Landslide Hazards Program within the Natural Hazards Program, as well as funding for Light Distance and Ranging (LiDAR) technology administered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in the FY 2017 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

On March 22, 2014, a massive landslide in Oso, Washington destroyed homes, damaged public infrastructure, and blocked the Stillaguamish River. The scope of the tragedy was unimaginable as 43 people lost their lives and many more were injured. Within a matter of seconds, 1.3 square miles of earthen material rushed down the mountainside, burying people in their homes under 40 feet of mud, turning cars into scrap metal, depositing hazardous material and other debris in the trees, river, and soil, and forever affecting the lives of thousands of our constituents. In small rural towns such as Oso, Arlington, and Darrington, where this landslide occurred, the impact of a disaster reaches far beyond the number of individuals who lost a family member or whose property was destroyed.

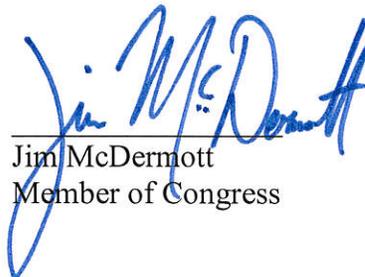
As you know, the Natural Hazards Program provides the best available scientific information and tools to reduce the threat of injuries, fatalities, and economic loss from a variety of natural disasters. This program also provides the ability to assess coastal and marine changes and potential vulnerabilities. In particular, the Landslide Hazards Program provides crucial information that leads to the reduction of losses from landslides and increases public safety through improved education and hazards mitigation strategies. USGS frequently provides hazard assessments, investigates and predicts landslides, and provides technical assistance during a response. Unfortunately, this program receives far less funding than other hazards programs, such as volcanoes and earthquakes. I ask that you provide robust funding for this critical program.

In addition, LiDAR is a remote sensing technology that can target potentially vulnerable areas with a laser and analyze the reflected light with billions of data points. This advanced technology should be utilized to a far greater extent to map potential landslide areas. The 3D Elevation Program's (3DEP) goal is to provide LiDAR for the entire nation and to make this information available through a national map. The contract that the National Geospatial Program oversees, the Geospatial Products and Services Contract (GPSC), is the vehicle used to purchase LiDAR and is carefully quality controlled. While USGS is authorized to spend up to \$300 million annually to purchase LiDAR, often only about 10 percent of this funding authority is realized. I ask that you utilize your existing authority to allocate robust funding for this program and apply this technology to the greatest extent possible.

I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do everything we can to prevent a similar tragedy in the future - not only for my constituents - but for those similarly threatened across the country. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

  
Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress

  
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

  
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress