



# NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS ALLIANCE

1201 NEW YORK AVE., NW SUITE 420 WASHINGTON, DC 20005 TEL.: 202 628 1500

[WWW.NSCALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.NSCALLIANCE.ORG)

February 7, 2018

William Werkheiser, Ph.D.  
Acting Director, USGS  
Office of the Director  
USGS Headquarter  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20192

Anne Kinsinger  
Associate Director, Ecosystems, USGS  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Dr. Werkheiser and Ms. Kinsinger:

On behalf of the Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSC Alliance), I write to express our deep concerns with the plan to eliminate United States Geological Survey (USGS) curatorial positions from their current posts at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. These 10 positions provide critically important high-quality biodiversity and environmental data that contributes to the USGS mission and helps inform decision-making by other US Department of the Interior bureaus, as well as by state, local, and tribal partners. The NSC Alliance respectfully request that this decision be reversed, particularly if Congress appropriates funding above the level requested by the USGS in the President's fiscal year 2018 budget.

The NSC Alliance advances the shared interests of natural science collections, their human resources, the institutions that house them, and their research activities for the benefit of science and society. Our members include the leading museums, living stock centers, and other groups associated with scientific collections and research in the United States.

The Smithsonian Institution is one of the nation's leading strategic centers for biological research. The positions within the USGS Biological Survey Unit proposed for

reassignment focus on research and collections management. They also afford valuable synergy among the USGS, Smithsonian, and other government agencies. As such, these positions help to integrate activities within our government that are essential for addressing nationally important scientific questions concerning the interface between humans, animals, plants, and microbes for a wide array of applications, including disease prevention, energy production, conservation, and environmental health. The data generated by these positions also provide an inexhaustible source of evolutionary solutions to living on Earth that benefit society, including natural toxins used in medicine and novel morphological features for modeling in engineering.

The NSC Alliance urges the USGS to maintain its support of this research unit so that it can continue to effectively serve the United States, its people, and its wildlife. I and other representatives of the NSC Alliance would be happy to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "J" being particularly large and stylized.

John M. Bates, PhD  
President, Natural Science Collections Alliance  
Head, Life Sciences Section, Integrative Research Center, The Field Museum