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**Outside Witness Testimony
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**

**Support for Select Federal Programs that Address Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
*U.S. Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey and Fish and Wildlife Service)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency***

March 20, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record in support of programs under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction that support climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 by a bipartisan, bicameral group of members of Congress to inform the development and enactment of federal environmental and energy policies. Since its inception, EESI has been an influential voice on sustainable energy and environmental issues and a trusted resource for public briefings and publications that bring science and facts to the policymaking process. In 1988, EESI's board of directors declared that addressing climate change was a moral imperative, and this directive guides our work to this day.

No single policy or program can deliver the emissions reductions necessary to avoid the worst climate change impacts or help all affected communities adapt to a changing environment. Instead, the urgency of climate change requires a comprehensive set of policies and programs, funded and administered to ensure inter- and intra-agency coordination and deliver maximum results. The Subcommittee has within its jurisdiction several agencies and many programs that would continue to advance climate change solutions—mitigation and adaptation—if adequately funded. As the Subcommittee carries out its work, EESI respectfully requests at least level funding for these and other programs in fiscal year 2021 and clear direction to agencies to adhere to Congressional intent and obligate and expend resources in a timely way to support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Thank you for your consideration.

U.S. Department of the Interior—U.S. Geological Survey

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides federal, state, and local policymakers and the general public with reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; monitors and protects public safety, health, and economic prosperity; improves resilience to natural hazards; informs stewardship of energy and mineral resources; helps sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations; improves water resource decision-making; investigates wildlife

diseases; and provides accurate, high-resolution geospatial data. USGS is plainly an indispensable partner of other agencies, states, local governments, tribal nations, and academia in the urgent quest to understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change. EESI respectfully encourages the Subcommittee to reject the administration's unacceptable budget request for USGS and instead provide at least level funding in FY2021.

U.S. Department of the Interior—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is primarily responsible for the management of fish and wildlife for the benefit of the general public. Among the Service's activities, of special interest to EESI are those that involve the maintenance and protection of natural resources for future generations. Climate change impacts—including increased frequency and severity of storms, flooding and erosion, and sea level rise—are threats to all inhabitants of our environment that require a wide range of mitigation efforts and the deployment of nature-based solutions whenever possible. One example of the Service's efforts to mitigate climate change is its Coastal Program, which provides technical and financial assistance for conservation and habitat restoration projects on private or public land that improve the resilience of coastal ecosystems. EESI respectfully encourages the Subcommittee to provide the Service at least level funding for programs that promote resilience and leverage public- and private-sector investment.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implements more than a dozen landmark statutes that promote safe and sustainable communities and carries out a wide range of programs that support public health and the environment. EPA's critical portfolio includes air and water quality protection, wastewater management, safe drinking water, pollution prevention, hazardous waste remediation including Superfund sites, sustainable building materials, indoor air quality, energy efficiency, and climate change. EPA is also responsible for certain research and development areas, environmental standards, pollution monitoring and compliance, technical assistance, and other work that has improved quality of life and the public's general welfare for nearly 50 years. While EPA should be at the leading edge of a federal response to climate change, the current administration has unfortunately focused mainly on industry-friendly rollbacks and a litany of deregulatory actions that will mean communities are less safe and sustainable than before.

EESI appreciates the Subcommittee's recognition of EPA's critical work and for funding its mission in spite of the administration's insufficient budget requests. The most confounding of the administration's proposed cuts involves ENERGY STAR®. ENERGY STAR is an immensely popular voluntary program that enjoys consistent industry participation and consumer brand recognition above 90%. It is also among the most impactful energy and climate programs in the federal government, saving consumers, families, and businesses more than \$30 billion each year in avoided energy costs. In addition, thousands of states, businesses, and utilities depend

on ENERGY STAR as a national framework for energy efficiency progress, relying on it in their product designs, energy management programs, building energy efficiency initiatives, and manufacturing practices. Few federal programs have achieved more in terms of climate change mitigation. ENERGY STAR delivers 290 million metric tons of avoided greenhouse gas emissions each year, which translates to about five percent of total U.S. emissions or about the same as removing 62 million cars from the nation's roads. EESI respectfully encourages the Subcommittee once again to reject the administration's proposal to eliminate ENERGY STAR (by applying a misguided fee-based structure) and instead provide \$60 million for FY2021.

In addition, EESI respectfully encourages the Subcommittee to provide at least level funding for EPA programs that fund, finance, and otherwise support projects to restore and emulate natural systems in order to increase human, ecosystem, and infrastructure resilience to climate impacts. Specifically, these programs include Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities, Nonpoint Source Grants (§319 of the Clean Water Act), Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Green America's Communities, Superfund Redevelopment Initiative, and Urban Waters Small Grants Program. Nature-based solutions effectively and cost-effectively reduce damage from natural hazards at least as well as traditional engineered projects. These programs deliver considerable economic and social benefits and offer significant potential for emissions reductions from carbon sequestration.