

February 13, 2013

Dear AAG members,

Another financial cliff measure, sequestration, or a set of steep automatic across-the-board budget cuts, is set to be imposed on March 1 and the effects on the geography community could be widespread. Government research accounts will have their budgets cut and programmatic activities and federal staffing will also suffer. The AAG encourages members to reach out to their Congressional representatives to share your perspectives on the potential impact sequestration may have on your community, department, research, or work.

The sequester has the potential to be damaging because federal agency leaders will have no discretion in how cuts are implemented. All non-defense discretionary programs will receive a 5.1 percent reduction and defense discretionary programs will be cut at a higher rate of 7.3 percent. These cuts will impact intramural and extramural geography research; programs that provide critical geographic research data; and the geographers and related scientists who work in federal agencies. The cuts will also have broader effects on all American education, social services, families, and communities. Sequestration will likely have a negative impact on most if not all AAG members.

For these reasons, we encourage you to contact your Senators and House members to share your concerns about sequestration. The links below provide information about contacting members of Congress through the phone or internet. AAG members may also wish to use social media, such as Twitter or Facebook, to share their perspectives with elected officials, friends, colleagues, and the wider community.

Contact information for all U.S. Senators can be found at: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm.

And you can locate your member of the House of Representatives by going to: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>.

A more-detailed background discussion on sequestration, the impending deadline, and its potential impacts is available at www.aag.org/sequestration-background. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Wertman, the AAG's Senior Program Manager for Government Relations, at jwertman@aag.org, or Doug Richardson, AAG Executive Director, at drichardson@aag.org.

Thank you,
Eric Sheppard, Julie Winkler, Douglas Richardson, and John Wertman