

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2025

Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

We write to express concern about potential disruption to the U.S. Geological Survey's work to help ensure safe drinking water quality and appropriate water supply in Georgia, following the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) apparent decision to terminate the lease for the USGS Water Science Center in Norcross. Relocation plans for USGS staff and critical office equipment are not clear, despite the lease in Norcross terminating in a matter of months.

Staff at the Water Sciences Center (the Center) perform water quality testing to ensure the safety of drinking water and maintain water gauges across Georgia, including at Lake Sidney Lanier and on the Chattahoochee River, which supplies most of metro Atlanta's drinking water. Local officials in metro Atlanta rely on gauges at Lake Lanier to ensure enough water is drawn from the lake to provide water to millions of Georgians every day. These gauges also inform water flows for Georgia's agriculture industry, nuclear reactors across the state, and Department of Defense installations, among others.

The gauges also provide information to warn of impending flash flooding, which helps notify the public and protect lives and property in Georgia.

Given the importance of this office and its impending closure, we are concerned about potential effects on drinking water quality and water supply across Georgia, especially metro Atlanta. Please provide a response in writing within 10 business days to the following questions:

1. Will USGS staff from the Norcross office be relocated?
2. Have employees in USGS's Norcross office been terminated? If so, what positions?
3. How will you ensure there is not an interruption in service to the USGS Water Science Center's critical mission?

4. How is the Department working with the Department of Defense, local governments, and private industry to ensure a clear line of communication about water flows?
5. Did you or your staff at the Department provide any input into DOGE's decision to terminate the lease of the USGS office in Norcross? If not, when were you notified of DOGE's decision to terminate the office lease?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Ossoff".

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Warnock".

Raphael Warnock
United States Senator