



For Immediate Release
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**New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) Honored
For Leadership to Protect, Promote Nation's Oceans**

**National Marine Sanctuary Foundation 2006 Annual
Leadership Award**

**Media Note: Photos from Ceremony Available,
Please Call Contact**

Washington, DC - In recognition of his longtime dedication and leadership towards protecting and preserving our nation's ocean and coastal resources, Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) was honored at the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) Annual Leadership Awards Dinner on June 13th at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC.

"The oceans remain our last, great frontier, and a relatively unexplored resource that we must protect so that generations to come will be able to enjoy and appreciate the oceans as we have," said Senator Gregg. "The oceans are the earth's memory - they store heat and are the force that drives our climate and weather. They are the highways of world trade, and first and foremost our exports and imports remain dependent on the maritime transportation system. The oceans provide vital energy and food. They impact human health, and countless drugs are being developed from marine products. The oceans provide recreational and economic opportunities, including sport and commercial fishing."

Throughout his career in the United States Senate, Senator Gregg has been a strong advocate for ocean issues. He has been a champion for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), routinely fighting on the agency's behalf for more funding and greater priority. When Senator Gregg served as Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee from the fall 1995 to early 2005, NOAA funding rose from \$1.86 billion to \$3.94 billion. In addition, the National Marine Sanctuary Program budget grew from \$12 million to \$66 million under his watch.

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In accepting the award Senator Gregg said, "We now have a network of underwater National Parks in this country called 'marine sanctuaries' and a network of estuarine reserves where rivers meet the sea. I have long made preserving and protecting the environment a top priority, and one that I continue to work on here in the Senate. There is so much left to be discovered in the vast waters around the Earth, and ocean exploration and education should be a key component of our national science policy. I am honored to be receiving this award and want to, in turn, recognize the many scientists and explorers who are developing exciting new findings every day."

Senator Gregg's leadership on numerous bills has lead NOAA into a new era. His legislation has pushed the agency forward into ocean exploration and research; ocean observing and predictions; climate observations and forecasts, and conservation of special estuarine and marine areas. He has also been a strong advocate for his home state of New Hampshire and the New England region, co-authoring a bill to designate segments of the Lamprey River as part of the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers System and helping lead the efforts to secure a conservation easement on the Connecticut Lakes Leadwaters Land and to conserve the Great Bay estuary.

"Senator Gregg hasn't just paid lip-service to issues surrounding our oceans," said NMSF Chairman Terry Garcia. "He has been a true leader and champion for New Hampshire's and our nation's oceans, coasts and lakes. Through his work Senator Gregg has directly helped to raise awareness of the problems our coastal waters face and has fought daily in the halls of Congress to protect and restore these precious resources so that future generations can continue to enjoy them."

The NMSF Leadership Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the 2006 Capitol Hill Oceans week, a two-day symposium that features ocean policy experts from government, private industry, nonprofits and academia. Participants look to raise awareness of important ocean and coastal issues among our nation's leaders and to build bridges among various ocean constituencies. Topics covered during this year's symposium will include alternative energy sources, marine debris, invasive species, the Census of Marine Life, the next steps in the development of an ocean observations system, a legislative agenda for Capitol Hill, and a regional Gulf of Maine panel focused on ecosystem management innovations.

Senator Gregg is being honored along with Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA), Retired Adm. James D. Watkins and former White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the private, non-profit partner to the federally managed National Marine Sanctuary Program. It was created to inspire all people to preserve, protect and promote our nationwide network of marine sanctuaries. The 14 sites within the national marine sanctuary system protect oceans and great lakes from the Florida Keys to the Hawaiian Islands and from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico.