

CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

November 18, 2009

The Honorable Nick Rahall, Chair
The Honorable Doc Hastings, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall and Congressman Hastings;

We write to respectfully urge the Natural Resources Committee to pass H.R. 3644, the Bay-Watershed Education and Training Regional Program and National Environmental Literacy Grant Program Act. This bill authorizes and strengthens the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's existing Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) and Environmental Literacy Grants (ELG) programs.

Over the past seven years, these two NOAA education programs have been essential to advancing ocean, atmospheric, and environmental literacy in the United States, a major goal of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy Report and the U.S. Ocean Action Plan. They have been well received by the ocean and environmental literacy communities, and in fact, ELG requests for proposals have been oversubscribed by a factor of 10.

The ELG program enables NOAA, as the nation's leading expert on weather, climate and ocean information, to partner with the nation's top non-profit organizations and educators to put this information to good use. For example, these grants have enabled more than 20 million people to gain access to compelling up-to-date weather, climate and ocean information through the Science on a Sphere and Ocean Today Kiosk from Alaska to Hawaii to California to Massachusetts. ELG funds have also allowed the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to update climate education standards that are used to guide science education in classrooms around the country to reflect state-of-the-art climate science. In addition, ELG grants to the National Science Teachers Association have given thousands of teachers access to the most accurate scientific information on climate, corals and hurricanes.

The B-WET grants programs support environmental education which promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. A fundamental goal of the programs are to demonstrate how the quality of the watershed affects the lives of the people who live in it. B-WET programs have now expanded to include the Chesapeake Bay, California, Hawaii, Pacific Northwest, Gulf of Mexico and New England, and this bill will add five new regions as well. BWET awards to state and local education organizations have provided opportunities to over 125,000 students and 6,200 teachers in 2008 alone.

It is important to now establish these programs in law, consistent with the education mandates provided to NOAA in both the America COMPETES Act (PL 110-69, Sec.4002) and the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (PL 111-11, Sec. 12304). They are vital to NOAA's ability to execute the educational function of its mission. They have demonstrated their effectiveness, as well as their value to stakeholder communities. And as our nation begins to

grapple with the complexities and challenges of a changing climate (and ocean and landscape), they are timely and highly relevant.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. For questions about this letter, please contact James Elder, Campaign for Environmental Literacy (978-526-7768, elder@FundEE.org).

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

American Fisheries Society (Gus Rassam, Executive Director)

American Fly Fishing Trade Association (Gary Berlin, President)

American Forest Foundation (Tom Martin, President)

American Hiking Society (Gregory A. Miller, President)

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (Paul Rowland, Executive Director)

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (Steve Olson, Vice President)

Biodiversity Project (Jennifer Browning, Executive Director)

Camp Fire USA (Pamela Wilcox, National Interim CEO)

Challenger Center for Space Science Education (Daniel Barstow, President)

Consortium for Ocean Leadership (Bob Gagosian, President and CEO)

Council on Environmental Education (Josetta Hawthorne, Executive Director)

Earth Day Network (Kathleen Rogers, President)

Earth Force (Lisa Bardwell, President)

Federation of Fly Fishers (Leah Elwell, Conservation Coordinator)

National Association for Interpretation (Tim Merriman, Executive Director)

National Audubon Society (Judy Braus, Vice President for Education)

National Council for Science and the Environment (Peter Saundry, Executive Director)

National Marine Educators Association (J. Adam Frederick, President)

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (Jason Patlis, President and CEO)

National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education (Bora Simmons, Director)

National Science Teachers Association (Jodi Peterson, Assistant Executive Director)

National Service-Learning Partnership (Nelda Brown, Executive Director)

National Wildlife Federation (Kevin Coyle, Vice President for Education)

North American Association for Environmental Education (Brian Day, Executive Director)

Ocean Alliance (Roger Payne, President)

Ocean Conservancy (Vikki Spruill, President and CEO)

Ocean Conservation Research (Michael Stocker, Director)

Ocean River Institute (Rob Moir, President)

Project WET Foundation (Dennis Nelson, President and CEO)

Second Nature (Anthony Cortese, President)

Sierra Club (Jacqueline Ostfeld, National Youth Representative)

Student Conservation Association (Dale Penny, President & CEO)

Tag-A-Giant Foundation (Shana Miller, Director)

The Ocean Foundation (Mark Spalding, President)

The Ocean Project (Bill Mott, Director)

Trout Unlimited (Charles Gauvin, President)

U.S. Green Building Council (Richard Fedrizzi, President & CEO)

Wildlife Conservation Society (John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President)

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Portland, OR (Scott Hoffman Black, Executive Director)

Youth Service America (Steven A. Culbertson, President & CEO)

Regional, State and Local Organizations:

Arizona Wildlife Education Foundation, Mesa, AZ (Karen Schedler, President)

Arnold Creek Productions, Lake Oswego, OR (Doug Freeman, COO-Producer)

Association of Northwest Steelheaders, Milwaukie, OR (Jay Burris, President)

Audubon New York, Albany, NY (Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director)

Buffalo Zoo, Buffalo, NY (Donna Fernandes, President and CEO)

Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, Golden, CO (Katie Navin, Acting Executive Director)

Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo, Brookfield, IL (Stuart D. Strahl, President and CEO)

Conservation Council for Hawaii, Honolulu, HI (Marjorie Ziegler, Executive Director)

Crosby Arboretum and Mississippi Native Plant Society, Picayune, MS (Janine Conklin, Director, President)

Environmental Education Association of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM (Barbara Garrity, Statewide Coordinator)

Environmental Education Association of Oregon, Portland, OR (Traci Price, Board Co-chair)

Florida Wildlife Federation, Tallahassee, FL (Manley Fuller, President)

Iowa Wildlife Federation, Des Moines, IA (Joe Wilkinson, President)

John Muir Elementary School, Seattle, WA (Awnie Thompson, Principal)

Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Baton Rouge, LA (Randy P. Lanctot, Executive Director)

Louisiana Science Teachers Association (Jean May-Brett, Treasurer)

Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Portland, OR (Debrah Marriott, Executive Director)

Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education, Annapolis, MD (Bronwyn Mitchell, Executive Director)

Minnesota Conservation Federation, St. Paul, MN (Steven Maurice, President)

Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance, Jackson, MS (Cynthia Harrell, President)

NatureBridge, San Francisco, CA (Susan Smartt, President)

New York Aquarium, Brooklyn, NY (Jon Forrest Dohlin, Director)

Northwest Youth Corps, Eugene, OR (Art Pope, Executive Director)

O'Neill Sea Odyssey, Santa Cruz, CA (Dan Haifley, Executive Director)

Renewable Resources Coalition, Anchorage, AK (Anders Gustafson, Executive Director)

Save the Dunes Council/Save the Dunes Conservation Fund, Michigan City, IN (Debroah Chubb, President)

Santa Barbara Zoo (Rich Block, Chief Executive Officer)

John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, IL (Ted A. Beattie, President and CEO)

Sierra Club Inner City Outings - Spokane, Spokane, WA (Chris Bachman, Project Director)

SOS Outreach, Avon, CO (Arn Menconi, Executive Director)

The Freshwater Trust, Portland, OR (Joe Whitworth, President)

The Wellness Coalition, Silver City, NM (Sam Castello, Executive Director)

Toledo Zoo, Toledo, Ohio (Anne Baker, CEO)

Washington Wildlife Federation, Bellevue, WA (Mark Quinn, President)

Wyoming Association for Environmental Education, WY (Susan McGuire, President)

Alaska Signatories:

Nils Andreassen, Executive Director, Institute of the North

Bruce Botelho, Mayor, City and Borough of Juneau

Dennis Egan, Senator, State Legislature

Kirk Hardcastle, Research Tech, Alaska Center for Energy and Power

Frank Holmes, Commissioner, Haines Energy and Sustainability Commission

Albert Howard, Mayor, City of Angoon

Leslie Isaacs, City Administrator, City of Klawock

Ben Johnson, Director of Operations, Petersburg Indian Association

Lainda Jones, Economic Development Coordinator, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes

Michael Kline, Division Manager, Ketchikan Public Utility

Mike Korsmo, President, Southeast Conference

Lisa Long, Director, Haida Corporation

Bill Lucey, Director/Coastal Planner, Yakutat Salmon Board City and Borough of Yakutat

Scott McAdams, Mayor, City and Borough of Sitka

Joe Nelson, Planning and Logistics Superintendent, City of Petersburg

Merrill Sawford, Assembly Member, City and Borough of Juneau

Beverly Schoonover, Executive Director, Juneau Watershed Partnership

Tim Shields, Executive Director, Takshanuk Watershed Council

Maxine Thompson, President, Angoon Oil Co.

Alicia Wendlandt, Director/Coastal Planner, Taiya Inlet Watershed Council

cc: Members of the House Natural Resources Committee