

CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

December 1, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
The Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner;

We write to respectfully urge the United States House of Representatives to pass H.R. 3644, the Ocean, Coastal, and Watershed Education 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)

American Sportfishing Association (Mike Nussman, President & CEO)

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 of Environmental Deans and Directors (Stephanie Pfirman, President)

Council on Environmental Education (Josetta Hawthorne, Executive Director)

Earth Day Network (Kathleen Rogers, President)

EarthEcho International (Philippe Cousteau, CEO)

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)

California:

Aquarium of the Pacific, Long Beach, CA (Jerry R. Schubel, President and CEO)

Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Los Angeles, CA (Bruce Saito, Executive Director)

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

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

Santa Barbara Zoo, Santa Barbara, CA (Rich Block, Chief Executive Officer)

Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative, San Francisco, CA (Conrad Benedicto, Director)

Chesapeake Bay Region:

Alice Ferguson Foundation, Accokeek, MD (Tracy Bowen, Executive Director)

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

Great Lakes Region:

Binder Park Zoo, Battle Creek, MI (Gregory B. Geise, President & CEO)

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

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

John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, IL (Ted A. Beattie, President and CEO)
Minnesota Conservation Federation, St. Paul, MN (Steven Maurice, President)
Save the Dunes Council/Save the Dunes Conservation Fund, Michigan City, IN (Debroah Chubb, President)
Toledo Zoo, Toledo, Ohio (Anne Baker, CEO)

Gulf Coast Region:

Crosby Arboretum/Mississippi Native Plant Society, Picayune, MS (Janine Conklin, President)
Florida Wildlife Federation, Tallahassee, FL (Manley Fuller, President)
Louisiana Science Teachers Association (Jean May-Brett, Treasurer)
Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Baton Rouge, LA (Randy P. Lanctot, Executive Director)
Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance, Jackson, MS (Cynthia Harrell, President)
Southern Association of Marine Educators (Joan R. Turner, President)

Hawaii:

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

New England:

New York/New Jersey:

Audubon New York, Albany, NY (Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director)
Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Syracuse, NY (Dereth Glance, Executive Director)
New York Aquarium, Brooklyn, NY (Jon Forrest Dohlin, Director)
Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper, NY (Jennifer J. Caddick, Executive Director)

Pacific Northwest Region:

Arnold Creek Productions, Lake Oswego, OR (Doug Freeman, COO-Producer)
Association of Northwest Steelheaders, Milwaukie, OR (Jay Burriss, President)
Center for Research in Environmental Science and Technologies, Wilsonville, OR (Bob Carlson, Director)
Concord Elementary Community Garden, Milwaukie, OR (Margaret Thornton, Chair)
Environmental Education Association of Oregon, Portland, OR (Traci Price, Board Co-chair)
Friends of the Straub Environmental Learning Center, Salem, OR (John Savage, Board President)
John Muir Elementary School, Seattle, WA (Awnie Thompson, Principal)
Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Portland, OR (Debrah Marriott, Executive Director)
Northwest Youth Corps, Eugene, OR (Art Pope, Executive Director)
Oregon Coast Aquarium, Newport, OR (Gary N. Gamer, President)
Place-Based Education Northwest, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR (Gregory Smith, Founder/Coordinator)
Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition, Portland, OR (Diane Lund-Muzikant, Board Chair)
Sierra Club Inner City Outings - Spokane, Spokane, WA (Chris Bachman, Project Director)
Siskiyou Field Institute, Selma, OR (Arnie Green, Executive Director)
The Freshwater Trust, Portland, OR (Joe Whitworth, President)
The Friends of Haystack Rock, Cannon Beach, OR (Tom Oxwang, Chair)
Tualatin Riverkeepers, Tigard, OR (Monica Smiley, Executive Director)
Washington Wildlife Federation, Bellevue, WA (Mark Quinn, President)

Western States:

Arizona Wildlife Education Foundation, Mesa, AZ (Karen Schedler, President)
Arizona Wildlife Federation, AZ (Ryna Rock, President)
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, Golden, CO (Katie Navin, Executive Director)
Colorado Wildlife Federation, CO (John Smeltzer, President)
Environmental Education Association of New Mexico, NM (Barbara Garrity, Statewide Coordinator)
Idaho Wildlife Federation, ID (Rob Fraser, President)

Iowa Wildlife Federation, Des Moines, IA (Joe Wilkinson, President)
New Mexico Wildlife Federation, NM (Ed Olona, President)
Renewable Resources Coalition, AK (Anders Gustafson, Executive Director)
SOS Outreach, Avon, CO (Arn Menconi, Executive Director)
The Wellness Coalition, Silver City, NM (Sam Castello, Executive Director)
Wyoming Association for Environmental Education, WY (Susan McGuire, President)

Alaska Individual 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
Linda 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