

Sea Grant Association

Sea Grant Reauthorization Status (as of February 2018) -- The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) was established by P.L. 89-688, the National Sea Grant College Program Act of 1966, as amended (33 USC § 1121 et seq. Sea Grant). Reauthorization legislation is currently under consideration in the Congress. On September 14, 2017, the Senate passed, via unanimous consent, **S. 129, the National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2017** (the Sea Grant Reauthorization Act). The National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2017 would reauthorize Sea Grant from 2017 through 2022. The bill also would make a number of program adjustments, including:

- Strengthen Sea Grant's mandate to support research and education activities;
- Create a more *equitable* placement of Sea Grant Fellows in congressional offices;
- Provide federal agencies with direct hiring authority for Knauss fellows after completion of the fellowship;
- Raise administrative cap to 5.5% for funding the national office; and
- Encouragement to use the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to assist in meeting critical staffing needs.

This bill would authorize total annual appropriations of \$81.6 million growing by FY 2022 to a level of \$102.5 million. The legislation provides specific authorization for non-native species, oyster restoration and research, harmful algal blooms, regional or national priority issues including resiliency, aquaculture, and fisheries. **H.R. 4306**, introduced by Rep. Jared Huffman and Rep. Frank LoBiondo was introduced on November 8, 2017. It is very similar to the Senate passed bill and has in excess of 20 bipartisan cosponsors.

Background on the Sea Grant College Program Act -- The Sea Grant College Program Act authorizes the awarding of grants and contracts to initiate and support programs at Sea Grant colleges and other institutions for research, education, and advisory services in any field related to the conservation and development of marine resources. A joint federal, state and local investment, Sea Grant provides solutions for the issues affecting our Nation's coastal communities (including the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico and communities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts), yielding quantifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits. Sea Grant embodies Administration priorities that emphasize economic security, public-private partnerships, and work force development. Sea Grant is a unique program within NOAA that sends 95% of its appropriated funds to coastal states through a competitive process to address issues that are identified as critical by public and private sector constituents and coastal communities throughout the United States. Sea Grant fosters cost-effective partnerships among state universities, state and local governments, NOAA, and coastal communities and businesses, leveraging nearly \$3 for every \$1 appropriated by Congress.

In 2016, the Sea Grant program helped generate an estimated **\$611 million** in economic impacts, created or sustained over **7,000 jobs**, provided **33 state-level programs** with funding that assisted **494 communities** with technical assistance on sustainable development practices, worked with about **1,300 industry and private sector, local, state and regional partners**, and supported the education and training of over **2,300 undergraduate and graduate students**.

Through Sea Grant, the Nation can be more responsive to the sustainable **economic development** potential of its coastal states, strengthen domestic aquaculture, improve the safety of the nation's coastal communities, and balance the economic and environmental challenges facing coastal regions. For these reasons, the SGA supports the reauthorization legislation pending in the Congress and urges Congress to enact this important legislation into law during this session of the 115th Congress.

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The Sea Grant Association (SGA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the Sea Grant Program concept. SGA's regular members are the academic institutions that participate in the National Sea Grant College Program. The SGA advocates for greater understanding, use, and conservation of marine, coastal and Great Lakes resources. For more information, please visit www.seagrants.org or contact:

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