

Sea Grant Association

**Mr. Paul Anderson
President, Sea Grant Association
Before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its National Sea Grant College Program.

My name is Paul Anderson and I work for the University of Maine where I direct the State of Maine's Sea Grant College Program. I am here today in my capacity as the President of the Sea Grant Association (or SGA), which is an association of the 32 Sea Grant programs from around the nation.

I have a written statement and I ask that it be included in the record of today's hearing.

[pause for Chairman's response].

In the next few minutes, I would like to talk to you about three things: the importance of supporting NOAA at the level of \$4.5 billion, the contribution that the National Sea Grant College Program makes to NOAA's mission, and why we recommend that Sea Grant be funded at \$72 million in the coming year.

Regarding NOAA:

The Sea Grant Association joins with the greater ocean, coastal and Great Lakes community in urging the Subcommittee to support the programs and activities of NOAA in line with the \$4.5 billion recommendation proposed by The House Oceans Caucus.

NOAA is critical to protecting our ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources, coastal communities, and the economy. NOAA also provides each American with weather forecasting, hurricane tracking, tsunami warnings, navigational information, fisheries management, hazard mitigation, scientific research, and local community assistance – but only if NOAA is adequately funded.

The funding level we recommend for NOAA would fully fund the President's fiscal year 2008 budget request, including the priorities and initiatives contained in the new interagency ocean research priorities plan and implementation strategy. This funding level will support core programs, rebuild vital observation programs, and enable NOAA to address other issues germane to their mission.

Regarding Sea Grant

The National Sea Grant College Program is part of NOAA. It is a state-federal partnership that engages government, universities, industry, educators, and private citizens to help Americans understand and wisely use our precious coastal and Great Lakes resources for enjoyment and long-term economic growth. The Sea Grant network unites 32 Programs, over 300 universities, and millions of people; and as such we are an agent for scientific discovery, technology transfer, and public education. In this way, Sea Grant addresses national, regional, state and local needs through research, education and outreach. Beneficiaries of the information that comes from Sea Grant include the fishing industry, marine trades, nature-based tourism, aquaculture, our coastal communities, and countless others.

The federal investment in Sea Grant – which is leveraged by matching funds from state and other sources -- enables a nationally coordinated network embedded in the best research universities to solve local, state and regional problems while also assisting NOAA in meeting its national objectives. Through this construct we not only apply urgently needed scientific discoveries to current issues, but we also help develop our

nation's work force through educational initiatives and graduate-based research programs.

The President's FY 2008 budget request for Sea Grant represents a hard freeze for the third year in a row, which is effectively a reduction in resources. This would mean cuts to key program management and extension staff nationwide and reduced funding for competitive research projects.

The SGA recommends that Sea Grant be funded at \$72 million – a level which is still well below the \$103 million authorized for FY 2008. This level is also consistent with the amount recommended in the House Dear Colleague Letter for Sea Grant which was submitted with 45 signatures to the Subcommittee on March 14, 2007 by Congressmen Tom Allen and Henry Brown.

Let me give you one example that illustrates how Sea Grant works to protect our nation, its resources and its citizens:

Following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Gulf Coast in 2005, the Sea Grant programs in the region worked closely with communities and agencies to assist with response and re-building efforts. The Washington and Alaska Sea Grant Programs, with help from other programs and donors, donated a 60-ton Travelift® which was transported from Alaska to Louisiana to salvage approximately 40,000 recreational boats and 3,000 commercial boats. Without a hoist to move displaced boats to dry land for repair, fishermen affected by the hurricanes would have been out of work for several years, potentially costing the fishing industry millions of dollars, both locally and nationally.

I would be happy to provide many other examples of Sea Grant's contributions at the local, state and national level at anyone's request.

You know, Mr. Chairman, the hardest thing about making these kinds of decisions; that is, funding for scientific research -- is knowing which science to fund? There is no sure bet in science, but the Sea Grant program has some methods that help us to ensure that we're putting our research dollars to work in the most meaningful way. We connect the scientists to users of the information before the funding proposal is developed. In that way we can be sure that, if the research is successful, ONE, the question being answered will be meaningful to the user community, and TWO, the resulting information will be delivered in a way that decision makers can readily use.

We don't just sponsor scientific research; we deliver science-based information to those who need it and use it. For example, I just held the first phase of the Sea Grant research competition for Maine and our pre-proposal review panel included a lobsterman, an aquaculturist, the head of the science program for our marine resource agency, a manager for a non-profit that supports our island communities, the head of the harbormaster's association and others. They were able to help us look at the proposed science and select the best proposals that made the most sense for our community. This is common in the Sea Grant programs around the country and is why we can deliver meaningful scientific answers to pressing questions.

The Sea Grant Association appreciates the difficult funding decisions the Subcommittee must make each year. We urge you to consider the National Sea Grant College Program as an investment in the future health and well-being of our coastal communities and the nation. Support for NOAA at a \$4.5 billion level and Sea Grant at a \$72 million level, will make this a safer, healthier and more prosperous nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these views and I would be happy to answer any questions you and the Subcommittee might have.