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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

March 23, 2004

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to sign the attached letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee to support funding for the National Sea Grant College Program at \$68.4 million for Fiscal Year 2005, a \$6 million increase over FY04 appropriations.

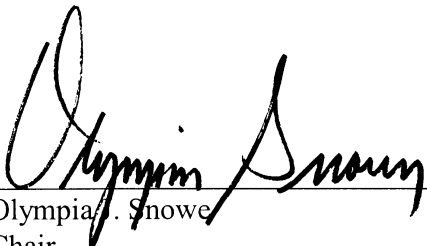
Sea Grant has proven its value to taxpayers as a program that supports high quality research that is directly responsive to the concerns of coastal constituents. Over 300 Sea Grant institutions across 31 programs collaborate to respond to issues of national and regional importance using partnerships which bring together federal, state and private sector participants for an extraordinary return on a modest federal investment.

In addition to supporting existing programs, the funds sought would enable Sea Grant to fulfill its mandate more completely. The goal of the Fisheries Extension program is to permanently place more fisheries field agents and specialists on the docks to assist commercial and recreational fishers. Sea Grant could complete implementation of Fish Extension proposals upon receiving the fully authorized \$3 million appropriation in FY05. Base funds are also needed to provide competitive merit funding for high performing Sea Grant College Programs, as mandated in Sea Grant's 2002 reauthorization.

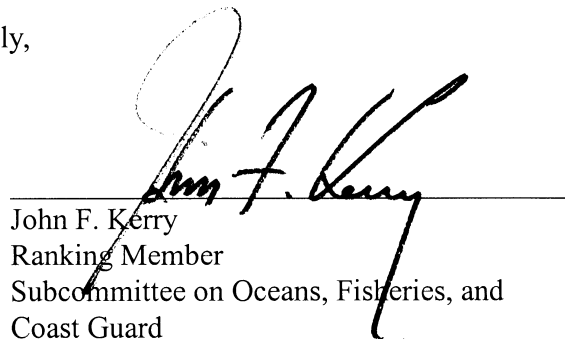
Funding of the Sea Grant program at \$68.4 million is a wise investment in healthy coastal economies and ecosystems. We invite you to sign the attached letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee to support this funding for the National Sea Grant College Program for Fiscal Year 2005.

If you are interested in signing this letter, please contact Michael Snyder of the majority staff (224-8172) or Brian Weitz of the minority staff (224-4912) for the Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and Coast Guard.

Sincerely,



Olympia J. Snowe
Chair
Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and Coast
Guard



John F. Kerry
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and
Coast Guard

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2004

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
State and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
S-146A Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
State and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
S-125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gregg and Hollings:

We are writing to urge you to appropriate funds to the National Sea Grant College Program in Fiscal Year 2005 at \$68.4 million, a \$6 million increase over the program's current FY04 appropriations and well within the authorized levels provided for in the National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 (P.L. 107-299).

The coastal zone is the most densely populated and widely used area in the country; 56% of the nation's civilian income is derived from coastal areas. Healthy coastal economies require investing in wise coastal resource management. The National Sea Grant College Program directly supports the efforts of states and communities to manage coastal resources. Sea Grant has proven its value to taxpayers as a program that supports rigorous, high quality research that is directly responsive to the concerns of coastal constituents. For this reason, Congress overwhelmingly approved reauthorization of this program in 2002 and significantly increased Sea Grant's authorized funding levels.

For nearly four decades, the National Sea Grant College Program has provided an extraordinary return on a rather small federal investment. Federal dollars appropriated to the Sea Grant program are leveraged and matched by state and private funds. The 31 Sea Grant programs, located in coastal and Great Lakes states, serve as the core of a national network of over 300 participating institutions involving more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, educators, students, and outreach experts. The program's distinguishing feature is policy-relevant science linked to an extensive outreach and education network. This structure ensures that Sea Grant research is useful to marine resource users and managers.

Since its establishment in 1966, Sea Grant has developed long-standing working relationships with a broad spectrum of stakeholders in every coastal state. Because Sea Grant is non-regulatory and science-based, it serves as an "honest broker" among a wide range of constituents. Sea Grant supports research, outreach and education activities that foster healthy marine ecosystems, seafood safety, sustainable living marine resources, economically viable and safe coastal communities, new technologies for ocean development, coastal observations and

education and human resources development.

However, over the last 20 years, Sea Grant has lost significant opportunities to address critical coastal, marine and Great Lakes issues simply because appropriations have not kept pace with inflation and demand. Sea Grant's buying power has decreased by 25% over the last two decades. In addition, Sea Grant has been authorized for work in four priority areas: fisheries extension, aquatic invasive species, oyster disease and harmful algal blooms. Unfortunately, the Sea Grant program has not received funding to fully support these Congressionally mandated priority areas of research. In order to continue serving the growing number of coastal constituents, Sea Grant funding must be increased.

In addition to supporting existing programs, this funding level would enable Sea Grant to fulfill its mandate more completely. The goal of the Fisheries Extension program is to permanently place more fisheries field agents and specialists on the docks to assist commercial and recreational fishers. Sea Grant could complete implementation of Fish Extension proposals upon receiving the fully authorized \$3 million appropriation in FY05. Base funds are also needed to provide competitive merit funding for high performing Sea Grant College Programs, as mandated in Sea Grant's 2002 reauthorization.

Based on Sea Grant's remarkable assets, we again urge you to provide \$68.4 million for Sea Grant base funding in Fiscal Year 2005.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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