

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2005

## HELP SEA GRANT ADDRESS THE NATION'S OCEAN AGENDA

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to sign the attached letter to the House Appropriations Committee to support funding for the National Sea Grant College Program at \$68.4 million for Fiscal Year 2006, a \$5.65 million increase over FY05 appropriations.

Sea Grant is enthusiastic about taking on the many challenges identified for it in the US Commission on Ocean Policy Report and the US Ocean Action Plan. Sea Grant's integrated approach is recognized by the Ocean Commission as key to its success. "Sea Grant's emphasis on applied research, education, and outreach results in projects that respond directly to local and national needs as determined by the marine industry, government representatives, resource managers, and the public." (*US Commission on Ocean Policy Report, pg. 333*).

These additional funds would allow Sea Grant address the Nation's Ocean Agenda in the following areas:

**Develop the Tools & Engage the Stakeholders in Coastal and Ocean Observations.** Sea Grant can enhance the development of the nation's Integrated Ocean Observations System by working with users to identify needs, engaging the private sector, supporting applied research, and providing educational and technology transfer programs to ensure that breakthroughs are transferred to the private sector and communicated to relevant audiences.

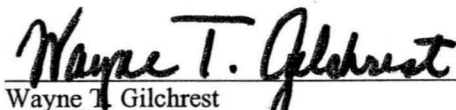
**Serve the Nation's Fishing Communities.** The goal of the Fisheries Extension program is to permanently place more fisheries field agents and specialists on the docks to assist commercial and recreational fishers and meet the informational needs of federal, regional, and state fishery management agencies.


**Implement Integrated Regional Programs.** Sea Grant is eager to serve as the Regional Network for the generation, delivery and interpretation of science-based regional information products as called for in the Ocean Commission Report, US Ocean Action Plan, and the President's FY06 budget request. Sea Grant is uniquely qualified to bring input from a diverse constituency to the table as the Ocean Research Priorities Plan is developed, and apply its research, education and outreach efforts to priority actions that address critical issues facing regional marine ecosystems.

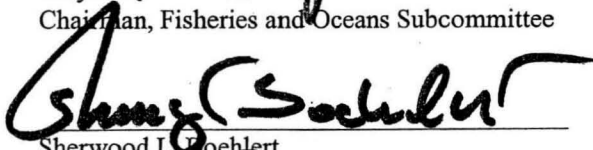
Importantly, the Ocean Commission acknowledges that Sea Grant's potential can only be reached with a "significant" expansion of the Sea Grant budget. Funding Sea Grant at \$68.4 million is a wise investment in addressing the Nation's Ocean Agenda. We invite you to sign the attached letter to the House Appropriations Committee in support of this funding request for the National Sea Grant College Program for Fiscal Year 2006.


If you are interested in signing this letter, please contact Steve Workman in Congressman Gilchrest's office at x55311 or Eric Gordon in Congressman Pallone's office at x54671.


Sincerely,

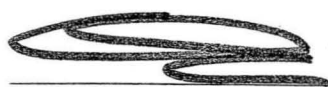
  
Wayne T. Gilchrest  
Chairman, Fisheries and Oceans Subcommittee

  
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member, Fisheries and Oceans Subcommittee

  
Sherwood L. Boehlert  
Chairman, Committee on Science

  
Bart Gordon  
Ranking Member, Committee on Science

  
Vernon J. Ehlers  
Chairman, Environmental, Technology and Standards Subcommittee

  
David Wu  
Ranking Member, Environmental, Technology and Standards Subcommittee

March XX, 2005

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
H-218 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David R. Obey  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Congressman Obey:

We are writing to urge you to appropriate funds to the National Sea Grant College Program in Fiscal Year 2006 at \$68.4 million, a \$5.65 million increase over the program's current FY05 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 President's request for FY06 is \$61.2 million, a \$3.8 million increase over the FY05 request.

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. Sea Grant is recognized by the Ocean Commission as an excellent investment. "The Sea Grant program, a partnership between NOAA, thirty state Sea Grant programs, and over 200 universities, is a highly-leveraged program. To the \$60 million in federal funds appropriated in fiscal year 2003, the states contributed an additional \$36 million, a match of nearly 60 percent." (*US Commission on Ocean Policy Report, pg. 333*).

As documented in the Ocean Commission Report, Sea Grant has "additional untapped capacity to promote coastal economic growth, improve the quality of marine environments, educate students in marine sciences, and solve critical marine and Great Lakes resource problems." Importantly, the Ocean Commission acknowledges that Sea Grant's potential can only be reached with a significant expansion of the Sea Grant budget. Specifically, the Commission recommends an immediate increase of \$20M and an eventual total increase of \$60M for Sea Grant.

Nearly 60% of the nation's civilian income is derived from coastal areas. We cannot have healthy coastal economies without investing in wise coastal resource management. The National Sea Grant College program directly supports the efforts of states and communities to manage coastal resources.

Providing Sea Grant base appropriations at \$68.4 million for FY06 would enable Sea Grant to:

**Develop Tools & Engage Stakeholders in Coastal and Ocean Observations.** Sea Grant can enhance the development of the nation's Integrated Ocean Observations System by: working with users to identify needs, engaging the private sector, supporting applied research, and providing educational and technology transfer programs to ensure that breakthroughs are transferred to the private sector and communicated to relevant audiences. This will require a +\$2.15 million increase in appropriations to the Sea Grant base.

**Serve the Nation's Fishing Communities.** Sea Grant has initiated, through its Fisheries Extension Enhancement program, a nationwide network of fisheries extension outreach specialists to serve the economic needs of the nation's commercial and recreational fishing interests and the informational needs of federal, regional, and state fishery management agencies. This will require a +\$1.5 million increase in appropriations to the Sea Grant base.

**Implement Integrated Regional Programs.** Sea Grant is eager to serve as the Regional Network for the generation, delivery and interpretation of science-based regional information products as called for in the Ocean Commission Report, U.S. Ocean Action Plan, and the President's FY06 budget request. Sea Grant is uniquely qualified to bring input from a diverse constituency to the table as the Ocean Research Priorities Plan is developed, and apply its research, education and outreach efforts to priority actions that address critical issues facing regional marine ecosystems. This will require a +\$2 million increase in appropriations to the Sea Grant base.

Based on Sea Grant's remarkable assets, we again urge you to provide \$68.4 million for Sea Grant base funding in FY 2006.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,