

Sea Grant Association

FY 2008 Appropriations Request for the National Sea Grant College Program

Sea Grant Addressing the Nation's Ocean, Coastal & Great Lakes Agenda

Congress has expressed a clear commitment to addressing the needs of the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. While it is impossible to understand the true potential of these natural resources to society, one thing is certain—the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes play a significant role in the everyday lives of all Americans, from affecting weather and climate, providing sustenance by way of safe and sustainable seafood, recreation and tourism, to enabling the next generation of medical breakthroughs via the exploration of yet-to-be-discovered resources. Appreciation for the promise and importance of the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes is apparent—action by way of investment is now needed to maintain progress. And the Administration has recognized this in FY08 with its interagency Ocean Research Priorities Plan initiative – *Charting the Course for Ocean Science in the United States for the Next Decade*.

For four decades, the National Sea Grant College Program, as a key component of NOAA's extramural research, education and outreach enterprise, has led the quest for practical solutions by providing research and education on national coastal and Great Lakes issues. Federal dollars appropriated to the Sea Grant program are leveraged and matched by state and private funds. The 32 Sea Grant programs, located in every coastal, Great Lakes and Gulf Coast state, conduct policy-relevant research linked to an extensive outreach and education network. This structure ensures that Sea Grant research is useful to coastal resource managers at the regional, state and local levels, marine-related businesses and industries, and most importantly the general public.

Sea Grant has established long-standing working relationships with a broad spectrum of stakeholders in every coastal state. Because it is science-based and non-regulatory, Sea Grant is viewed 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 observatories and education and human resources development. The *U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy* (2004) called on Congress to expand the Sea Grant program in conjunction with a doubling of all ocean and coastal research funding.

Sea Grant FY2008 Appropriations Request **Support an FY 2008 Appropriation of \$72 million for Sea Grant in the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act**

Sea Grant requests an FY 2008 appropriation of \$72 million for base funding, which is well within the program's authorized level of \$103 million. The Administration is requesting \$55 million. ***The Administration's request of \$55 million for FY 2008 puts Sea Grant at a hard freeze for the third year in a row. The implications of such a freeze for the nation with respect to the economy, sustainability of natural resources, and national safety and security are significant.*** With the costs of research and education rising, the flat-funding of Sea Grant during the last few years have forced programs to cut jobs and leave countless high-quality research projects unsupported. The Sea Grant network cannot sustain current activities, staff, and operations within this budget scenario. This request of \$72 million is a small investment when considering the results it will yield. It would allow Sea Grant to sustain ongoing research and education efforts, address emerging needs, and continue assisting NOAA in carrying out its many missions.

Sea Grant Saving Lives, Preserving Livelihoods and Maintaining our Precious Natural Resources

In January 2007 *Charting The Course* was released as an interagency plan for ocean science research that focuses on the most compelling issues in key areas of interaction between society and the ocean. Many of the plan's priorities dovetail with Sea Grant's strength, experience, and relationships with state and local decision makers and ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resource managers. Below are just two priorities drawn from the interagency plan with information regarding how Sea Grant contributes towards meeting the objectives embodied in that interagency priority:

Increasing Resilience to Natural Hazards. Coastal areas of the United States comprise only 10% of our nation's land mass, yet they are home to over half of all Americans. As witnessed by recent record-breaking storm seasons, coastal communities and the natural resources and infrastructure on which they depend are at increasing risk from hurricanes, tsunamis, coastal storms, shoreline change, and sea level rise. Sea Grant institutions and its partners pool research, education and outreach capabilities to enhance mitigation, preparedness, planning, education, response, and recovery in coastal communities throughout the nation.

Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Ocean Resources. Domestic seafood production has not kept pace with consumer demand; the United States imports an ever-increasing amount of seafood consumed domestically. Issues with quality assurance and consistent supplies are increasing. At the same time, the nation's commercial seafood industry is threatened by the loss of coastal access and multiple use conflicts in coastal waters. Sea Grant institutions, through the use of its fisheries extension, address the increasing needs of the nation's seafood industry by utilizing expertise in seafood safety and technology and marine aquaculture.

www.sga.seagrant.org

Paul S. Anderson, SGA President, 207.581.1435, panderson@maine.edu

M. Richard DeVoe, SGA External Relations Committee Chair, 843.727.2078, rjck.devoe@scseagrant.org

Joel M. Widder, Lewis-Burke Associates LLC, 202-289-7475, jwidder@lewis-burke.org