

# Sea Grant Association

**Official Statement for the Record  
Before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC**

**Submitted by Paul S. Anderson  
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Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the Sea Grant Association (SGA) I respectfully submit this written testimony for the official record. Thank you for the opportunity to express these views. The Sea Grant Association joins with other stakeholders in urging the Subcommittee to recognize and support the vital research and outreach programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). ***The community requests that the Subcommittee fund NOAA at \$4.5 billion in FY 2008.*** This is a modest request when considering the immense impact such an increase would have in terms of assisting NOAA in carrying out its mission: *to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs.* Further, SGA requests that, within the overall FY 2008 appropriation for NOAA, the Subcommittee ***appropriate \$72 million in base funding for the National Sea Grant College Program.*** I will use the remainder of this statement to discuss why it is so important to support Sea Grant at realistic levels this year and in the future.

The National Sea Grant College Program is a key component of NOAA's extramural research, education and outreach enterprise. This request of \$72 million is well within the \$103 million authorized for FY 2008 in P.L. 107-299, National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002, and consistent with the level of base funding approved by your Subcommittee (Commerce, Justice and Science) last year. Further it is the amount supported in the Senate Dear Colleague Letter for Sea Grant which was submitted with 27 signatures to the Subcommittee on March 29, 2007 by Senators Maria Cantwell and Olympia Snowe.

The Bush Administration's request of \$55 million for FY 2008 would put Sea Grant at a hard freeze for the third year in a row. 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 and outreach projects unsupported. The Sea Grant network cannot sustain current activities, staff, and operations within this budget scenario. This request of \$72 million 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—Science Serving the Nation’s Coasts*

Research and outreach programs supported by Sea Grant are based on competition, undergo rigorous peer-review, and are geared to address the many marine, coastal and Great Lakes challenges and opportunities that face our citizens. The federal investment in Sea Grant enables a nationally coordinated network embedded in the best research universities to apply unparalleled intellectual capital to address these problems and opportunities while assisting NOAA in addressing its missions. Cost-effectiveness is enhanced by access to existing university management infrastructure.

Sea Grant serves the nation in many ways. Sea Grant’s unmatched access to regional, state and local constituencies through its extension and outreach programs ensures that the federal investment is targeted at relevant issues. The Sea Grant model contributes to the missions of NOAA and other federal agencies, and state and local governments, to the benefit of the general public. In addition, marine education programs supported by Sea Grant funds reach from kindergarten to marine-related business people to elder hostels.

Sea Grant is a national program addressing national, regional, state and local needs. It is a partnership among government, academia, business, industry, scientists, and private citizens to help Americans understand and wisely use our precious coastal waters and Great Lakes for enjoyment and long-term economic growth. This network unites 32 Programs, over 300 universities, and millions of people. Sea Grant is an agent for scientific discovery, technology transfer, economic growth, resource conservation, and public education. It is government as our citizens want it – visible, tangible, relevant, efficient, and effective.

## *Sea Grant—An Economic Driver*

Sea Grant is an investment in America’s economic future. Attempts to balance our booming coastal economy with its associated impacts on the coastal and marine environment have raised the stakes for effective government action. America’s ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources encompass an immense area with more than 95,000 miles of coastline and more than 3.4 million square miles of ocean within the U.S. territorial sea. Over half the nation’s 280 million people live in coastal counties that comprise less than one-fifth of the total land area of the United States. The economy of these coastal counties is critical to the economic well being of the entire nation, providing a wide array of goods and services that account for at least 50 percent of the gross national product of the United States. By 2010, U.S. foreign trade in goods is expected to double to \$5 trillion, with ocean-going cargo increasing by 30 percent. Coastal tourism and recreation account for 85 percent of all U.S. tourism revenues. The oceans, in one way or another, account for one out of every six jobs. Tax revenues in coastal areas are among the fastest growing revenue sources for state and local governments. In fact, the collective economic impact of the coastal economy far exceeds U.S. agriculture, and yet federal investments in Sea Grant colleges and universities are much smaller than investments in the Land Grant college and university system funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for agriculture and land-based natural resource activities, *the program after which Sea Grant was modeled.*

Sea Grant has been leading the quest for practical solutions by providing research and education on national coastal and Great Lakes issues for four decades. Federal dollars appropriated to the Sea Grant program are leveraged and matched by state and private funds by at least 2 to 1, some states matching 60 percent or more. The matched federal investment fills an enormous demand

for expertise to tackle rapid growth, change, and pressure on coastal resources. In addition, 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. Some examples where Sea Grant has contributed to economic growth and vitality at the local, state and regional levels include:

- ∞ Following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Gulf Coast in 2005, approximately 3,000 commercial and 35,000 to 40,000 recreational boats were in need of salvage due to the storms. The Washington and Alaska Sea Grant Programs donated a surplus 60-ton Travelift® from Alaska to Plaquemine Parish, Louisiana. Without that 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 millions of dollars in loss to the fishing industry.
- ∞ Sea Grant plays an instrumental role in nature-based tourism by promoting low impact uses of natural resources. For example, efforts to develop state designated underwater preserves have led to new diving activity in Great Lakes coastal communities providing an economic stimulus of at least \$1.5 million over a two-year period.
- ∞ Sea Grant saved taxpayers \$120,000 in the annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep litter cleanup program in South Carolina. Over the past 14 years, more than 75,000 volunteers have collected 728 tons of trash and have saved state taxpayers more than \$1.6 million.
- ∞ Sea Grant research efforts to develop new drugs from marine organisms have resulted in discovery and description of more than 1,000 compounds that may be vitally important to the health industry.
- ∞ Sea Grant training at 5,000 seafood processing plants will prevent 20,000 to 60,000 seafood-related illnesses a year, which could cost consumers as much as \$115 million annually.
- ∞ Sea grant specialists are working directly with seaport managers, resource managers, commercial interests and the general public to address issues associated with ports, harbors and marine transportation — ecological and economic centers of America's coasts. For example, in Southern California, Sea Grant continues to educate local businesses on maritime security and business continuity in this, the busiest port complex in the U.S.
- ∞ Sea Grant research and extension work with hybrid striped bass aquaculture has expanded this species from being a demonstration project ten years ago to a \$25 million dollar annual business.

- ∞ In North Carolina, 200 of the 205 new oceanfront homes built to the Sea Grant hurricane standards survived Hurricane Fran in 1996, compared to more than 500 older oceanfront houses in the same area that were destroyed.

### *Sea Grant—A Local Approach to Addressing National Priorities*

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. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy called on Congress in its 2004 report to expand the Sea Grant program in conjunction with a doubling of all ocean and coastal research funding. Further, in January 2007, the Bush Administration released its inter-agency Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy, *Charting the Course for Ocean Science in the United States for the Next Decade*. Several of the plan's most important priorities dovetail with Sea Grant's strength, experience, and relationships with state and local decision makers and ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resource managers. Here are just two examples:

***Sea Grant Increases Resiliency to Natural Hazards.*** Coastal areas of the United States comprise only 10 percent 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 their partners pool research, education and outreach capabilities to enhance mitigation, preparedness, planning, education, response, and recovery in coastal communities throughout the nation. As a result of the 2005 hurricanes, Sea Grant is working to improve storm modeling and community resiliency through regional research initiatives. In addition, Sea Grant is working closely with coastal communities to develop and implement long-term planning that will allow communities to become more resilient to storm events.

***Sea Grant is a Dedicated Steward of Natural and Cultural Ocean and Great Lakes 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 their fisheries extension, address the increasing needs of the nation's seafood industry by utilizing expertise in seafood safety and technology and marine aquaculture.

The above examples illustrate Sea Grant's connectivity to the Administration's stated priorities. As the federal government works to implement these priorities, we hope it will look to the National Sea Grant College Program—a major component of NOAA's extramural research arm—as a resource and as a partner.

The SGA recognizes and appreciates the difficult funding tradeoffs the Subcommittee is forced to make each year. We urge you to consider Sea Grant as an investment in the future health and well-being of our coastal communities and support the program at \$72 million in FY 2008.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these views.

## About the SGA

The *Sea Grant Association* is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the Sea Grant program concept. The SGA's regular membership consists of the academic institutions that participate in the National Sea Grant College Program, located within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). SGA provides the mechanism for these institutions to coordinate their activities, to set program priorities at both the regional and national level, and to provide a unified voice for these institutions on issues of importance to the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. The SGA advocates for greater understanding, use, and conservation of marine, coastal and Great Lakes resources.

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