Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2009

The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We are writing to urge you to appropriate $75.6 million to the National Sea Grant College Program for Fiscal Year 2010.

The economic challenges facing the United States are real and are all the more daunting within coastal and Great Lakes communities. These communities are home to more than 50 percent of the U.S. population and contribute more than 50 percent of the U.S. GDP. Compound this with other challenges facing coastal areas, such as climate-related environmental changes, continuing degradation of natural resources, and stresses on infrastructure, and it is clear that coastal America is in desperate need of assistance.

The National Sea Grant College Program is a federal-state partnership administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that works to understand and address these challenges through research, education and outreach. Sea Grant draws on its 32 university-based programs in coastal, Great Lakes, and island states to engage citizens, scientists, organizations, and governments to address the nation's most pressing coastal and Great Lakes needs. Sea Grant brings to bear the intellectual power of more than 300 universities and thousands of scientists and extension specialists in the application of research to complex marine and coastal challenges.

Sea Grant is a wise investment. For example:

- The financial return to coastal communities for each federal dollar invested in Sea Grant is estimated at around $20.
- Sea Grant has been successful in navigating the changing needs of coastal America over the years, thanks to its ability to quickly deploy and focus its vast university-based network of professionals.
- Sea Grant helps citizens and localities become stewards of shoreline resources through lifelong education in formal and informal settings. Fostering an informed public also creates a safer public.
- Sea Grant creates more resilient and environmentally responsible coastal communities. For example, Sea Grant's research and outreach has helped communities adopt policies for the design of buildings and communities that are safer, more energy efficient, and more resilient to coastal hazards.

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- Sea Grant engages stakeholders and partners across all sectors to ensure that Sea Grant products, information and services are meeting the distinct needs of its constituents.

These are just a few examples of the benefits of investing in Sea Grant.

Unfortunately, at a time when we should be making the investments that will turn our communities around, Sea Grant is losing its ability to provide the very services that has put the program in such demand for over four decades. If we do not invest in Sea Grant, less science will be applied to economic and environmental questions, fewer experts will be working in our communities, and we will lose an overall capacity to manage existing needs of coastal areas and deal with colossal emerging issues, such as climate change and energy sustainability.

Appropriating $75.6 million to Sea Grant for Fiscal Year 2010 will be a down payment on the reinvigoration of America's coastal prosperity and the nation's economic revival. It would allow Sea Grant to sustain current research, education and outreach activities—which are in danger of significant cutbacks, including jobs—and address emerging coastal needs.

We are in the throes of one of the toughest economic downturns this nation has experienced in decades. Sea Grant is a sound investment that will have a direct impact on the communities in which we live, work and play. We hope the Subcommittee will see the immediate and long-term value in investing in the Sea Grant program by appropriating $75.6 million for Fiscal Year 2010.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jay Inslee
Member of Congress

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Rep. Madeline Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

Rep. Henry Brown
Member of Congress

Rep. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress

Rep. Neil Abercrombie
Member of Congress

Rep. Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Rep. Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

Rep. Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Rep. Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Rep. Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Rep. Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress

Rep. Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Rep. Mazie K. Hirono
Member of Congress

Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper
Member of Congress

Rep. Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Rep. Susan Davis
Member of Congress

Rep. Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Rep. Bill Delahunt
Member of Congress

Rep. Ron Klein
Member of Congress

Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Rep. Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress

Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Rep. Jim Langevin
Member of Congress

Rep. John M. McHugh
Member of Congress

Rep. Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Rep. Mike McIntyre
Member of Congress

Rep. Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Rep. Michael Michaud
Member of Congress

Rep. Henry Waxman
Member of Congress

Rep. Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Rep. Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

Rep. James L. Oberstar
Member of Congress

Rep. David Wu
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Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Rep. Adam Putnam
Member of Congress

Rep. Ron Paul
Member of Congress

Rep. Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Rep. Michael Capuano
Member of Congress

Rep. Soloman P. Ortiz
Member of Congress