January 12, 2006

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member
United States Senate
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Committee on Appropriations
S-146A Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf, Chairman
The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, and Commerce and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
H-309 Capitol Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Wolf, and Ranking Members Mikulski and Mollohan:

We write to you today to express our gratitude for your recent role in restoring the full $6.371 million budget for education initiatives at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Education and Sustainable Development (OESD).

These funds include one of only two federal grant-making programs specified for environmental literacy. As such, they are essential to fostering an informed society armed with the knowledge necessary for making complex social and economic decisions about the environment that provides our common life-support system. Not only does such knowledge enable Americans to better realize the vital interrelationships between the ocean, atmospheric, and terrestrial systems, it also directly impacts our nation's ability to balance the use and conservation of marine and atmospheric resources.

Due to your leadership, the OESD will continue to help cultivate America's next generation of environmental and ocean stewards. Your role in ensuring this has not gone unnoticed by the hundreds of thousands of Americans devoted to closing our nation's environmental literacy gap; and together, we commend your efforts.

We look forward to continuing our work together in the future. You are true champions for a more sustainable future! If you have any questions about this letter, feel free to contact Dr. James L Elder, Campaign for Environmental Literacy, at 978-526-7768 (elder@FundEE.org).

Sincerely,

SIGNATORIES:

Alabama A&M University – Center for Environmental Research & Training

American Meteorological Society

American Zoo and Aquarium Association

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

Campaign for Environmental Literacy

Center for Environmental Education

Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education

Council for Environmental Education

Earth Force

EarthDay Network

Ecological Society of America

National Association of Biology Teachers

National Audubon Society

National Council for Science and the Environment

National Marine Educator's Association

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

National Wildlife Federation

North American Association for Environmental Education

Ocean Alliance

Second Nature

The Ocean Project