

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As you work to draft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, we urge you to reject the administration's proposed elimination of the National Sea Grant College Program. We continue to support at least the current funding level of \$63 million.

As senators from some of the 33 states with Sea Grant Programs, we see firsthand how this federal investment is leveraged locally to bring immense returns to coastal communities, fishermen, universities, and students. Any cuts to this funding would have a devastating impact and we strongly urge you to reject any proposals to reduce this program.

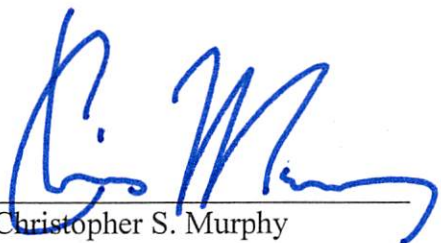
The National Sea Grant College Program is a federal-local partnership that funds 33 university-based research, extension, and education centers. The federal investment of \$67.3 million in FY 2015 in these centers yielded \$575 million in economic benefit, an 854 percent return on federal investment. This economic impact includes creating and sustaining nearly 3,000 local businesses and more than 20,000 jobs. Marine businesses and fishermen in coastal communities rely on the knowledge and skills of Sea Grant staff and outreach materials. This is evidenced by the 40,243 fishermen that Sea Grant helped to adopt sustainable harvesting techniques. Sea Grant has also helped train 1,956 professionals working in the seafood processing industry in hazard analysis and critical control points.

In addition to supporting businesses and jobs in local communities across the country, Sea Grant programs provide innovative research and technologies to help local communities meet new challenges such as coastal resiliency and address long-term goals like habitat restoration or water quality monitoring. In the past year alone, Sea Grant programs conducted 896 trainings to help communities improve resiliency, restored 127,348 acres of degraded ecosystems, and developed 582 ecosystem-based management tools used by 4,033 resource managers.

Finally, Sea Grant programs across the country are helping educate the next generation of marine scientists by supporting 1,108 graduate fellows and 860 undergraduate students. Sea Grant programs also engage the public in science through a volunteer program. As a part of this program, local volunteers completed 265,602 volunteer hours with Sea Grant programs in 2015.

Sea Grant Programs are vital to local businesses, a source of good jobs, and an important part of preserving our coastal communities for generations to come. We believe zeroing out or reducing funding for the Sea Grant program would be a mistake and urge you to provide robust support for the program in the Fiscal Year 2018 bill.

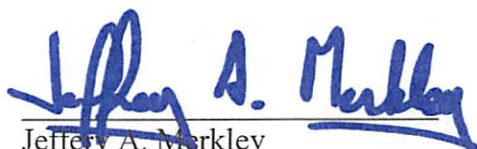
Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



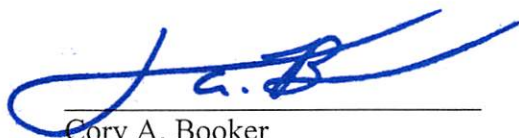
Bill Cassidy M.D.
United States Senator



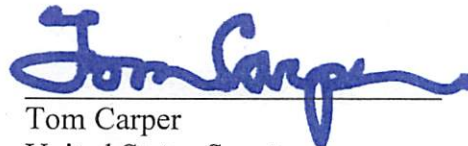
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



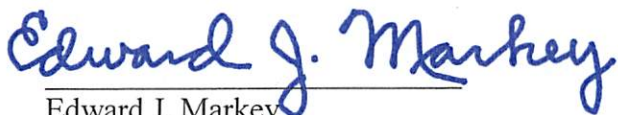
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



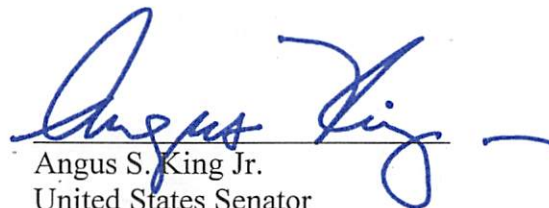
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



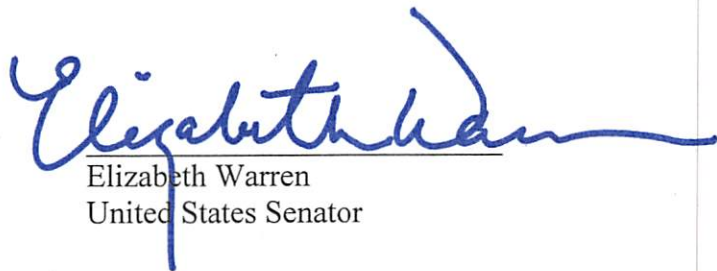
Tom Carper
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Angus S. King Jr.
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

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Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



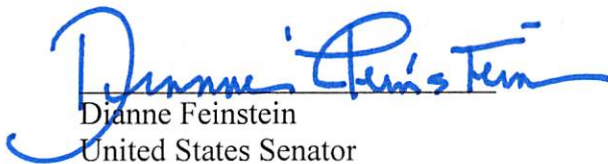
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



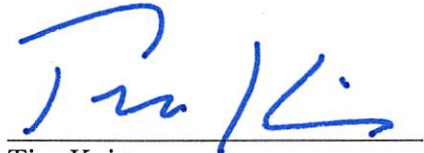
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



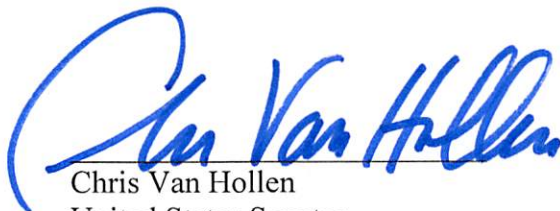
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

JOHN BROWN

WILLIAM BROWN

MARSH BROWN

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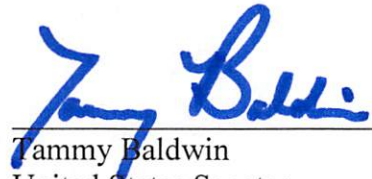
JOHN BROWN

JOHN BROWN

JOHN BROWN



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator