Date:  Immediately after May 23

Dear “Stakeholder(s)”:

I am writing to express our deepest appreciation for the efforts earlier this year to support our Sea Grant program.  Earlier this month, the Congress and the President signed off on legislation that will keep the Sea Grant program operating for the rest of this fiscal year (until September 30, 2017).  Your efforts to explain why Sea Grant is an important program for you and your colleagues resulted in the Congress rejecting a $30 million reduction in Sea Grant that had been proposed by the current Administration for FY 2017.  With Sea Grant now being fully funded for the balance of this fiscal year, our program will be able to [*provide two or three specific activities germane to your program her*e] which will benefit our state’s coastal economy and natural resource management activities.

In the last few days, the Administration has released the details of its FY 2018 budget blueprint.  As expected, the Administration is still proposing the termination of the Sea Grant program in FY 2018.  We hope you will reach out once again to our state’s Congressional delegation as soon as possible and reiterate your request that they let the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittees know of their strong support for Sea Grant and they should reject the proposal to terminate the program in FY 2018, and instead fund the National Sea Grant College Program at $80 million.

You can use some or all of the following paragraphs in your communication with our state’s Congressional delegation:

The Sea Grant program is a joint federal-state investment that supports the health and resilience of the Nation’s coastal communities (including the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico and communities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts), yielding quantifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits at the national, regional, state, and local levels. Sea Grant is a unique program within NOAA that sends 95% of its appropriated funds to coastal states through a competitive process to solve problems that are identified as critical by public and private sector constituents and our nation’s coastal communities. This is done through the establishment of efficient, cost-effective partnerships between state universities, NOAA, coastal communities and businesses –who all share in the costs of solutions – resulting in a leveraging of nearly $3 for every $1 appropriated by Congress.

In 2015-16 the Sea Grant program helped generate an estimated $575 million in economic impacts; created or sustained nearly 21,000 jobs; provided 33 state-level programs and 534 communities with technical assistance on sustainable development practices; worked with about 1300 industry, local, state and regional partners; and supported the education and training of almost 2000 undergraduate and graduate students.  The Sea Grant program achieved this with a Congressional appropriation in FY 2016 of $73 million, which is leveraged with matching funds provided by states, universities, and other sources.

For the United States to be more responsive to the sustainable economic development potential of its coastal states, strengthen domestic aquaculture, improve coastal resilience of the nation’s communities, and balance the economic and environmental challenges the country’s coastal regions face, the Sea Grant Association is recommending federal funding of $80 million in FY2018.  These funds will support: sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, resilient communities and economies, healthy coastal ecosystems, and environmental literacy and workforce development. This funding recommendation is consistent with the enabling act which authorizes the Sea Grant program in Public Law 89-688 -- the National Sea Grant College Program Act of 1966, as amended (33 USC § 1121 et seq).

Thank you for your continued support and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

State Sea Grant Director