Dear Member of Congress/Senator:

As constituents and beneficiaries of our state’s Sea Grant program, we are writing to ask you to request that the Appropriations Committees fund the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) at a level of $85 million in fiscal year 2019 – a level consistent with the total amount proposed to be authorized in HR 4306 and S129 and the new FY19 budget agreement Congress recently passed into law. This recommended funding level would support the key focus areas in the program’s strategic plan: healthy coastal ecosystems; sustainable fisheries and aquaculture; resilient communities and economies; environmental literacy and workforce development.The Sea Grant program is administered by NOAA’s Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, which is funded in the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Bill.

Sea Grant is authorized and managed in accord with its enabling legislation. In that way Sea Grant supports state and local decision makers via a non-regulatory approach based on competitive, peer-reviewed, sound science and technology. Sea Grant assists state and local entities as they address challenges facing coastal communities. Sea Grant enables coastal economic interests to develop and thrive which supports the growth and development of our coastal economy.

Does Sea Grant deliver value to the taxpayer? The short answer is “definitely yes”. In 2016 the Sea Grant program helped generate an estimated $611 million in economic impacts; created or sustained over 7,000 jobs; provided 33 state-level programs and 494 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 over 2300 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.

Approximately 95% of the federal funding provided to Sea Grant leaves Washington and goes to the state programs where it is used to conduct research, carry out extension and STEM education activities, and deliver valuable coastal resiliency services to our state and the other states that participate in this national program. Moreover, federal funding through the Sea Grant program has a significant leveraging impact with every two federal dollars invested attracting at least an additional dollar in non-federal resources in matching funding.

**[THIS PLACE IN THE LETTER IS WHERE EACH STATE PROGRAM AND/OR THE STATE PROGRAM’S STATKEHOLDERS/SIGNATORIES SHOULD INCLUDE A SECTION WITH ONE OR MORE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF HOW THE STATE’S SEA GRANT PROGRAM HAS CONTRIBUTED, ASSISTED, SUPPORTED, ETC THE REGION’S COASTAL ECONOMY AND COASTAL MARINE ENVIRONMENT IN WAYS THAT MAKE SENSE FOR THE SPECIFIC REGION OR STATE. THIS IS THE PLACE IN THE LETTER WHERE YOU GIVE THE MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND THE SENATOR THE STORY OR STORIES THAT REMIND THEM WHY SEA GRANT IS IMPORTANT FOR THEIR AREA]**

We recognize that the Nation is facing very tight fiscal constraints and that suggests that where we have discretion, federal funding ought to go to those programs that deliver economic, environmental, and education benefits to our state and local decision makers. The Sea Grant program does this while also increasing our coastal communities’ resiliency in a cost-effective manner. For that reason and because of the importance the Sea Grant program to the long-term health of our state, we urge you to strongly support the National Sea Grant College Program by submitting a programmatic request to the Appropriations Committee that would fund the program at a level of $85 million in fiscal year 2019. We have attached a document that should be helpful for submitting such a request to the Appropriations Committees.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Attachment: Final SGA FY19 Request