

TO SEND ON April 26, 2011

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Jacob J. Lew
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson and Director Lew:

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we thank you for your past support of environmental education and urge you to continue funding the Office of Environmental Education at the Environmental Protection Agency at the fiscal year 2010 level of \$9 million in your fiscal year 2011 spending plan to Congress.

We understand that difficult choices must be made because of the fiscal year 2011 CR passed by Congress, however, now more than ever, we need to continue investing in environmental education for our nation's economic stability. In order to ensure our nation remains globally competitive in the 21st Century workforce and fosters innovation in America, our citizens must have an understanding of the environmental challenges and the opportunities that impact our economy, health, national security and energy independence.

Research indicates that environmental education increases critical thinking skills and improves performance on standardized tests, including in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subject areas. This investment in environmental education is vital to America's economic future.

The Office of Environmental Education at the EPA supports life-long environmental education and stewardship through several highly-leveraged, but under-resourced programs including the National Environmental Education Training Program to train teachers, the National Environmental Education Foundation to leverage public/private partnerships, and an environmental education grant program to support local environmental education providers. All 50 states benefit from these successful programs that accomplish so much in our communities.

The Office of Environmental Education provides significant support for reaching historically underserved audiences such as communities of color, economically distressed and geographically isolated communities. As a national leader in outreach, the activities supported by the Office are instrumental in cultivating minority youth as future leaders in both the field of environmental education and a broad range of scientific professions including environmental and earth sciences.

In addition, these programs and environmental education more broadly has overwhelming public support. Fully 95 percent of American adults and 96 percent of parents support environmental education being taught in the schools according to an environment survey conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide.

In times of economic crisis it is imperative that we continue our investment in education. Environmental education prepares tomorrow's entrepreneurs and innovators with the skills necessary to lead in the 21st Century clean energy economy. We urge the EPA to continue funding the Office of Environmental Education at \$9 million in fiscal year 2011.

Should you have any questions about this letter, please have your staff contact Jim Elder of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy at (978) 526-7768, Danielle Moodie-Mills of the National Wildlife Federation at (202) 797-6634 or Rita Hite of the American Forest Foundation at 202-463-2594. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

National and Regional Organizations:

American Forest Foundation
Associations of Zoos and Aquariums
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Earth Day Network
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation
NatureBridge
North American Association for Environmental Education
Sierra Club

State and Local Organizations: