

CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

September 15, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chair
The Honorable James Walsh, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Specter, Chairman Obey, and Ranking Member Walsh;

On behalf of the thousands of higher education institutions, organizations, students, industry partners, faculty, and administrators throughout the nation who are committed to helping the U.S. find a pathway towards a more sustainable future, we write to you today to urge you to appropriate \$50 million as originally envisioned for the University Sustainability Program authorized as part of the College Opportunity and Affordability Act (HR 4137).

Many of us originally wrote to you last March about the importance of funding this new program. However, we are very concerned about the impact of an extended Continuing Resolution on funding this new program, and request that Congress provide additional funding to the Department of Education to launch this high priority in FY09. Time is not on our side with this issue.

Many of our institutions are committed, but struggling to find funds, to implement critical responses to such pressing issues as climate change and clean energy. As a result, this new program has received broad support across the country from over 200 college and university presidents, representing the full range from small private liberal arts colleges to large public universities. Over 25 major higher education associations, collectively representing the majority of higher education institutions in the nation, have also endorsed the program, along with many other environmental and education organizations.

In short, the University Sustainability Program will help equip the coming generation of scientists, engineers, planners, and business professionals with the fundamental knowledge vital to meet the mounting global challenges that we face as a nation. As energy demands, population growth, and urban development place greater stress on our economic and life-support systems, the need for developing innovative and successful sustainable development practices is becoming critical to sustaining our economic competitiveness, improving environmental health, and creating more livable communities. Higher education plays a pivotal role in meeting this need.

We thank you for considering this important request. Please contact James Elder, Director of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy (elder@FundEE.org, 978-526-7768) with any questions about this letter.

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 Ocean County College, NJ
 Ohio University, OH
 Onondaga Community College, NY
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 Paul Smith's College, NY
 Pratt Institute, NY
 Pratt Institute, NY
 Prescott College, AZ
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 Rosemont College, PA
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