

Alaska Natural Resource and Outdoor Education

200 W. 34th. Street, Suite 1007

Anchorage, Alaska USA 99503

"...promoting excellence in natural resource, outdoor and environmental education"

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies Committee on Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

May 2, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski:

As your constituents in Alaska, we want to give a shout out for the wonderful environmental and natural resource education programs around our great state, and beyond, that have been supported through funding from the National Environmental Education Act (NEEA). Your past support has been critical for ensuring that Alaskans, particularly our youth, could participate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs, to participate in climate resiliency efforts, and to develop the tools needed to become our next generation of environmental stewards.

Consequently, we are herein respectfully requesting that your Subcommittee on Interior and Environment continue its support for environmental education by funding this successful program at \$10 million in the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill. This small but effective program provides a non-regulatory and cost-saving approach for many federal and state agencies, universities, and non-profits to implement a tremendous variety of positive learning opportunities and environmentally beneficial actions. Around the country, these have ranged from water conservation in desert states to protecting stream quality in urban areas, and helping boaters be careful about their discharges.

NEEA funding is good for Alaska and good for our nation! The \$10 million request will restore funding to about the level it was for many years with barely enough extra (\$300,000) to cover a few years of inflation.

Here in Alaska, the most recent NEEA grant provides an opportunity for students from Fairbanks to Anchorage, Kenai, and Juneau to develop indoor hydroponic gardening and school waste management projects in partnership with their teacher and families. Students are growing and eating fresh food, improving their health, supporting local food security, and learning how this all contributes to effective environmental stewardship.

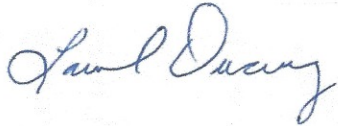
I have attached a table summarizing recent NEEA grants in Alaska and we would be happy to provide you with more information. We also wanted to thank you for your bipartisan leadership in the area of climate resiliency, which has tremendous implications for all of us, including social and economic costs for our rural villages, our state-wide infrastructure, and our daily lives.

As the state's leading coalition of environmental educators, the Alaska Natural Resource and Outdoor Education Association has reached out to many of our partners and previous grant recipients who have signed on to this letter and our request for your support. Our representatives, Mel Sikes, Natural

Resource Education Specialist with the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, and Ann Rappoport, Board Chair for The Alaska Center Education Fund, have requested a teleconference meeting with you and your staff to provide further information about the benefits of NEEA grants.

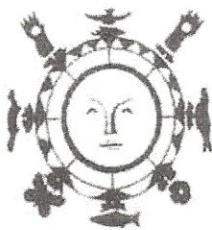
In advance, thank you for your time and your support for a better environment for all Alaskans, as well as for our children's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laurel Devaney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the last word.

Laurel Devaney, President
Alaska Natural Resource & Outdoor Educators

Attachments



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These individuals and groups have enthusiastically signed on in support of NEEA funding.

Kurt Eilo, Executive Director
Alaska Forum

Polly Cagg, Executive Director
AK Center Education Fund/AK Center

Doug Penn, District Administrator
Chugach School District

Sheryl Sotelo, Environmental Literacy
Director, STEM Ovations

Beth Trowbridge, Executive Director
Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies

Michael A. Montecasso
Executive Director
Alaska Botanical Garden

Executive Director,
Alaska Songbird Institute

Tara L. Riemer, President and CEO
Alaska SeaLife Center

Kristin Carpenter, Executive Director
Copper River Watershed Project

George Andy Hall, Executive Director
Alaska Geographic Association

Robin Mayo, Executive Director,
Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment

Tim Troll, Executive Director
Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust

Candi Dierenfeld, PhD ED
Associate Professor of Extension, 4-H Youth Development
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kay W. Shoemaker, M.S.O.E.E.
Director, Alaska Master Naturalist Program
Director, Alaska Chapter of the Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators
Site Supervisor, Anchorage Outdoor School