



March 19, 2010

House to Vote on H.R. 3644 The Ocean, Coastal, and Watershed Education Act
Authorizes 10% Funding Increase Each Year for Programs

Today, the House will consider *The Ocean, Coastal, and Watershed Education Act* (H.R. 3644), which would authorize funding for two programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): the Environmental Literacy Grant Program and the Bay-Watershed Education and Training Regional Program (B-WET).

However, this legislation includes a significant spending increase that our government cannot afford and unnecessarily singles out two of more than a dozen NOAA education programs for special treatment.

Republican concerns with H.R. 3644:

- The bill authorizes a total of \$145.7 million for the programs. This represents a 10 percent increase each year for five years for both programs. At a time when our country is facing record deficits, we cannot afford to automatically increase funding every year. Unfortunately, the Democrat Majority on the Rules Committee would not even allow a vote on an amendment by House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings that would have frozen spending for the programs at FY2010 levels.
- The B-WET program did not receive any funding in the President's proposed FY 2011 or FY2010 budgets. Why is Congress attempting to authorize millions of dollars for a program that the President, who has never shied away from massive spending increases, has even proposed to eliminate?
- The President's budget only requests \$5.043 million for the Environmental Literacy Grant Program in FY2011- well below the \$13.2 million authorized for the first year alone in this bill.
- There is no reason to single out these two specific education programs, especially since the National Academy of Sciences just two weeks ago issued a nearly 200-page report on NOAA's entire education effort. It took almost two years and cost taxpayers more than \$1 million to complete this study; Congress would be completely ignoring its findings and recommendations by voting on this bill today.

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