November 14, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Co-Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Inouye:

I am writing on behalf of the 85 member institutions of the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE) to express support for S. 1465, the Ocean and Coastal Literacy in Urban and other Environments Act. CORE’s universities, laboratories, aquariums, and companies work together to develop a common vision for the ocean science community and to advance the Nation’s ocean research, education and policy.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in 2004 identified ocean and coastal literacy as one of the most important building blocks of an integrated national ocean policy. The Ocean and Coastal Literacy in Urban and other Environments Act will provide the legislative framework for creating a unified national strategy for ocean and coastal science education and literacy, with a special focus on groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the marine sciences. The bill also builds on existing efforts of federal agencies, particularly those of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In particular, CORE endorses the approaches taken in S. 1465 that: (1) create a new K-12 level initiative and expand NOAA’s college-level Minority Serving Institution program to increase minority participation in ocean and coastal sciences; (2) provide professional development programs for pre- and in-service teachers; (3) engage scientists to work with educators and continue working with students; (4) provide workforce and professional development through traineeships, scholarships, and internships; (5) improve ocean sciences career opportunities for minorities; (6) develop and implement programmatic evaluation and assessment; (7) focus attention on ocean and coastal education in urban areas and create an ocean literate citizenry to solve the problems specific to those areas; (8) place greater emphasis on informal education efforts; (9) coordinate National Science Education Standards and State Standards with high-quality curricular materials; and (10) promote the increased use of technology.

In addition, Ocean CLUE coordinates, organizes and strengthens existing federal ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes education programs by directing the President to establish an interagency Ocean and Coastal Science Education Committee. Ocean CLUE also authorizes several existing interagency programs, such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence. It makes education a NOAA mandate by codifying ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes science education as one of its missions. Ocean CLUE strengthens and coordinates existing NOAA education programs, including regional programs such as Bay Watershed Education and Training Program (BWET) in California, Hawaii, and the Chesapeake Bay,
teacher-training programs like Teacher-At-Sea, Sea Grant’s education activities and the National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERRS) education activities.

CORE applauds the legislation’s goals of incorporating ocean issues into K-12 education and strengthening the Nation’s ocean awareness; these provisions implement recommendations made by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. CORE also supports the Commission recommendations to improve links between the ocean research and education communities and increase our investments in higher education and the future ocean workforce. To achieve these goals there must be additional funding provided to all of the Federal Agencies currently engaged in ocean and coastal education. The bill only authorizes these agencies to use up to $25 million from their existing appropriation to develop and implement the National Ocean and Coastal Education Program—making this an unfunded mandate. We recommend that you authorize a specified amount for each agency to develop and implement this program. We would be glad to work with you in developing provisions and providing comments that will improve the bill and incorporate the full range of tools available to our universities for promoting ocean science education (See Attached Recommendations).

We at CORE thank you for your continued commitment to improving ocean science education and our Nation’s ocean literacy, and urge you and your colleagues on the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee to move forward with the Ocean and Coastal Literacy in Urban and other Environments Act.

Sincerely and
Very respectfully,

[Signatures]

R.D. West
President

Dr. Mark R. Abbott
Chair, Board of Governors

cc: The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN S. 1465

Page 4  Paragraph 7  Line 17  Insert *improving water quality*

Page 10  Paragraph 1  Line 12  Insert “*and education*” after the word “research”

Page 10  Paragraph 2  Line 16  Insert “*and education*” after the word “research”

Page 12  Sec. 102, subsection (b)  Insert new paragraph “*(19) *The Marine Mammal Commission*” and renumber existing paragraph (19) as paragraph (20).

Page 16  Paragraph 2  Line 8  Insert “*professional education societies such as National Marine Educators Association*” after the word “educators”

Page 16  Paragraph 3  Line 15  Insert “*conservation,*” before the work “management”

Page 17  Paragraph 3  Line 10  Insert “*ocean and coastal science education and*” after the word “in”.

Page 18  Paragraph 2  Line 17  Delete “and” before “international” and insert after “organizations” “*and those of States, academic institutions, museums and aquariums, industry, foundations, and other non-governmental organizations;*”

Page 19  Paragraph 5  Line 5  Insert “*conservation and,*” before the word “use”.

Page 21  Paragraph 2  Line 16  Insert “*marine and*” before the word “coastal”.

Page 25  Paragraph 2  Line 6  Insert “*formal and informal*” before the word “education”

Page 26  Paragraph 5  Line 5  Insert “*formal and informal*” before the word “education” (NOTE: subparagraph E does include formal and informal environmental science education)

Page 26  Subparagraph C  Line 14  Change “sciences” to “science”

Page 26  Subparagraph E  Line 19  Delete “environmental” and insert “*ocean and coastal*”

Page 27  Subparagraph B  Line 8  Delete first “or” and insert comma

Page 27  Subparagraph (2)(B)  Lines 21-24  Modify as follows “providing teach training *and/or professional development programs* in ocean and coastal education, including adequate training *and/or professional development programs* for teachers to bring experimental learning into their classrooms.”

Page 29  Clause ii  Line 15  Insert “*conservation and,*” before the word “policy”.

Page 30  Subsection (e)  Line 13  Delete “have”

Page 32  Subsection (h)  Line 15  Insert “*ocean and coastal*” before science