



House Natural Resources Committee Approves Ocean, Coastal, and Watershed Education Act

Legislation Will Bolster NOAA's Key Environmental Education Programs

WASHINGTON (November 18)—The U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources today approved legislation expanding key watershed and environmental education programs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Congresswoman Lois Capps (CA-23) introduced the bipartisan legislation in September to improve ocean, coastal, and watershed education and literacy. H.R. 3644, the Ocean, Coastal, and Watershed Education Act, would authorize a national Environmental Literacy Grant program as well as a regional Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) program focused on local watershed education.

Kevin Coyle, NWF's Vice President for Education and Training, said today:

“This legislation will provide opportunities for young people to ‘Be Out There’ experiencing the outdoors learning about their local watersheds, bays, estuaries and coastal areas.

“Hands-on environmental education gets children outdoors experiencing nature first hand. It helps children learn about the world around them, a world they will inherit and must learn to take care of. Research also demonstrates that environmental education is good for student achievement in the classroom.

“In addition to the many academic and conservation benefits of environmental education, business leaders increasingly believe that an environmentally literate workforce is critical to America's competitiveness in the 21st Century.

“National Wildlife Federation applauds Congresswoman Capps for developing this critical legislation to bolster NOAA education initiatives to give young people a better understanding of their local watersheds and help ensure our next generation of conservation stewards.”

Coyle testified in October before the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife. To view the complete testimony, visit

www.nwf.org/nwfwebadmin/binaryVault/NWF%20Testimony%20on%20H.R.%203644%2010-13-09.pdf.

Representative Lois Capps (D-CA) said:

“B-WET brings local watersheds into every classroom and every child out into the watershed in an exciting and meaningful way. I’ve witnessed firsthand how this program has provided opportunities for hundreds of children and teachers on the Central and South Coast to learn about the importance of our coastal and marine environment. Under my legislation, more watershed communities across the country will be able to replicate the success we’ve experienced on California’s coast.”

Dr. James Elder, Director of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy, said:

“Bolstering literacy programs is critical to furthering environmental stewardship in the United States, and helps prepare our students for the coming clean energy economy. As America’s leaders, such as Congresswoman Capps, work to advance policies to address environmental and educational challenges, our schools and training platforms must keep pace. Support for the bill addressed at today’s hearing, as well as existing programs, will help ensure our students’ preparedness for both the classroom and for a bright future.”

NWF last month launched the new [Be Out There](http://www.beoutthere.org)TM campaign to get families across the United States to open the door and get outside. The family campaign was kicked off in educational partnership with the Warner Bros. film *Where The Wild Things Are*. A daily dose of the outdoors improves children’s physical, mental and emotional well being. The benefits of outdoor play are real: healthier kids with a life-long appreciation of wildlife and nature. Visit www.beoutthere.org.

National Wildlife Federation is America's largest conservation organization inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future. Visit www.nwf.org.

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