

CAMPAIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

October 22, 2007

The Honorable George Miller, Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller,

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 respectfully request that your Committee pass the **Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2007** (HR 3637) as expeditiously as possible.

In short, the Higher Education Sustainability Act (HESA) seeks to equip the coming generation of college graduates 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.

The Higher Education Sustainability Act will:

- Educate and train the next generation of scientists, engineers, planners, and business professionals who will be developing new strategies and tools for environmental/resource conservation, energy efficiency and sustainable development, as well as build a large market for sustainably-produced goods and services.
- Promote good business practices in higher education that will provide living examples to other sectors of how sustainability practices result in greater productivity and quality of life.

Five years of campus education, research, operations, and policy funding through HESA could help: 1) accelerate U.S. energy independence, through new thinking and developments in both energy production/consumption and product design/manufacturing, and 2) update the perspectives and content of dozens of majors, from the design fields of architecture, engineering and planning to economics, business, health and community development, to reflect new understandings of sustainable development.

Sustainable development practices are now being employed by hundreds of U.S. cities and companies. However, a recent study of Fortune 500 CEOs reported that, while 90 percent agreed that "sustainable development is important to their company's future," only 30 percent feel their company has the "skills, information, and personnel to meet the challenge." If the resources called for in HESA are provided, universities can play a critical role in accelerating this transition to a more viable society.

With HESA funding, colleges and universities will be able to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the critical, systemic challenges faced by the world in this new century and to enable them to benefit from the economic opportunities that will arise as a result of solutions they develop. We simply need the critical seed funds that this bill provides to initiate needed changes on campuses across the country.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with your staff to discuss HESA further. Thank you for considering this important request, as well as your important co-sponsorship of HESA when it was first introduced in 2004. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact James L. Elder, Director of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy (Elder@FundEE.org, 978-526-7768).

CO-SIGNATORIES:

Higher Education Associations:

American Academy of Religion (John R. Fitzmier, Executive Director)
American Association of Community Colleges (George R. Boggs, President)
American College Personnel Association (Gregory Roberts, Executive Director)
American Dental Education Association
American Studies Association (John Stephens, Executive Director)
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (Tom Kimmerer, Executive Director)
Association of College & Research Libraries (Julie Todaro, President)
Association of College and University Housing Officers - International (Sallie Traxler, Executive Director)
Association of College Unions International (Marsha Herman-Betzen, Executive Director)
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (Richard D. Legon, President)
Collegiate Conference and Events Directors-International (Deborah Blom, Executive Director)
Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (Paul R. Corts, President)
Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (Bruce Coull, President)
Ecological Society of America (Katherine S. McCarter, Executive Director)
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (Antonio R. Flores, President & CEO)
National Association for Campus Activities (John Ogle, Director of Education and Research)
National Association of Biology Teachers (Pat Waller, President)
National Association of College and University Business Officers (Matthew Hamill, Senior Vice President)
National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (Karen Bach, Chief Operating Officer)
Society for College and University Planning (Jolene Knapp, Executive Director)

NGOS:

Campaign for Environmental Literacy (James L. Elder, Director)
Chesapeake Bay Foundation (Don Baugh, Vice President for Education)
Comprehensive US Sustainable Population (Alan Kuper, President)
Earth Day Network (Kathleen Rogers, President)
Massachusetts Audubon Society (Laura Johnson, President)
National Council for Science and the Environment (Peter Saundry, Executive Director)
National Wildlife Federation (Kevin Coyle, Vice President for Education)
North American Association for Environmental Education (Brian Day, Executive Director)
Ocean Project (Bill Mott, Director)
Second Nature (Anthony Cortese, President)

Corporations:

Innoveyda (E. Fiesler, CEO)
Mary Kay, Inc. (Richard C. Bartlett, Vice Chair)
Nike (Brad Figel, Director, Global Government Affairs)

Colleges and Universities:

Berea College (Larry D. Shinn, President)
California State University, East Bay (Mohammad H. Qayoumi, President)
Michigan State University (Terry Link, Director, Office of Campus Sustainability)
New York University (Steve Heuer Associate Director, Federal Relations)
Portland State University (David Ervin, Coordinator of Academic Sustainability Programs)
Western Michigan University (Gregory Rosine, Senior Vice President)
University of Florida (Office of Sustainability)
University of Puget Sound (Ronald R. Thomas, President)