



H.R. 5618 –NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 5618 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) on March 13, 2008. The House Committee on Natural Resources ordered the bill to be ordered, as amended, by voice vote on June 12, 2008.

H.R. 5618 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 14, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 5618 amends the National Sea Grant College Program Reauthorization Act of 1998 to encourage collaboration among Sea Grant colleges and universities. The bill also amends the Sea Grant program performance review standards.

H.R. 5618 amends the National Sea Grant College Program Reauthorization Act of 2002 to require a report every two years on efforts to include minority and economically disadvantaged students in the program. The bill also designates the National Sea Grant Review Panel as the "National Sea Grant Advisory Board". The Board is required to report to Congress every two years on the state of the National Sea Grant program.

The bill exempts the Dean John A. Knars Marine Policy Fellowship Program from having to match grant awards in order to achieve parity between fellows in Congress and the Executive branch. The percentage of funds exempt from the non-federal match requirement is raised from 1 percent to five percent, under this provision.

The bill authorizes the appropriation of \$498 million for the purposes of this Act over fiscal years 2009-2014.

BACKGROUND

The National Sea Grant College program was first established in 1966, and was most recently reauthorized by the National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002. The program is currently authorized at \$88 million for fiscal year 2008. The program is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). There are over 30 Sea Grant programs at coastal colleges and universities in the United States which sponsor marine science research, education, and training. The program also operates two fellowship programs: the John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, and the Sea Grant/NOAA Fisheries Graduate Fellowship.

Once a program is designated as a Sea Grant College, it may compete for federal grants for up to two-thirds of the cost of the project. The other one-third of funding must come from non-federal matching funds. The National Sea Grant College Program is currently overseen by the National Sea Grant Review Panel, which is comprised of 15 members and advises the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the National Sea Grant College Program on scientific and administrative policy.

[National Sea Grant College Program](#)

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that implementing H.R. 5618 "would total \$316 million over the 2009-2013 period, in addition to \$51 million from funding provided in previous years. An



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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additional \$182 million would be spent after 2013, including \$100 million authorized to be appropriated for 2014." [Full CBO Cost Estimate](#)

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