Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee  
Jeffrey R. Stephan, Chair  
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January 28, 2010

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair  
Senator Bert Steadman, Co-Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska Legislature  

Re: Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program (MAP) Program: University of Alaska FY2011 Operating Budget Request for $614,000.  

Dear Senators Hoffman and Steadman, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee respectfully requests that the Senate Finance Committee amend the Governor’s University of Alaska (UA) FY2011 Operating Budget to add $614,000 for the purpose of funding 6 Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program (MAP) positions. The $614,000 funding for these MAP positions was included in the UA FY2011 Program Request that was submitted to the Governor; however, the UA MAP funding request was not included in the Governor’s FY2011 Proposed Operating Budget that was submitted to the Legislature.

You may find the $614,000 UA FY2011 Program Request for these six MAP positions in the UA “Redbook” (“University of Alaska Fiscal Year 2011 Operating & Capital Budget Request”;<http://www.alaska.edu/swbir/budget/publications/redbook/FY11Redbook.pdf>). References to the requested $614,000 MAP funding is found on page 8 (“FY11 Priority Program Requests by Category”) under the “Climate” category [i.e., as “UAF to Community Needs in Coastal Alaska (MAP)”], and is more completely described on page 14 (“FY11 Operating Budget Program Descriptions”), also under the “Climate” category; that is:

UAF Economic Sustainability, Application of University Research, and Response to Community Needs in Coastal Alaska: Outreach and Engagement by the Marine Advisory Program (MAP)
(GF: $614.0, NGF: $27.0, Total: $641.0)

The Marine Advisory Program, a unit in the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, has been providing extension and educational services in rural, coastal Alaska for 45 years. The program serves as an extension arm of the Alaska Sea Grant College Program and has university faculty located in 10 coastal communities. The faculty provide information, technical assistance and workforce development opportunities in a variety of subjects, including the impact of climate change on local marine resources.

Currently, 30% of MAP’s positions (located in Unalaska, Petersburg, Cordova and Nome) are funded either by short term grants due to sunset in 2009, are vacant while waiting for funding (Bristol Bay), or there is no MAP agent at all (Kodiak). This request is to solidify funding for MAP faculty in these sites by moving them to regular UAF funded faculty positions.

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MAP agents represent the extension component of Alaska Sea Grant College Program. Five of the six requested positions are essential to the success of active MAP offices that currently exist in Nome, Dillingham, Unalaska, Cordova and Petersburg. The federal grants and private donations that fund these five positions are due to sunset by mid 2010. The sixth requested position addresses an important and outstanding need for a coastal MAP Agent in Kodiak, a position that has been vacant for 13 years due to lack of funding. Sixteen MAP Agents currently serve in ten Alaska coastal communities. The five offices served by the five MAP Agents who are the subject of this funding request, that is, 50% of all Alaska Sea Grant MAP coastal offices, will be lost if the requested funds are not provided.

MAP agents work in partnership with local communities, residents and groups. MAP agents provide training in a broad array of subjects that have relevance to Alaska coastal community residents and businesses, including, but not limited to, marketing, quality control (HACCP), refrigeration, financial management, regulatory processes, and marine safety training. They also provide other assistance, guidance and training in areas such as economic efficiency, development and diversification; coastal tourism; shellfish farming; small business development; energy conservation; educational and workforce opportunities for youths and adults; connecting youth with science, and with educational and employment opportunities; linking research and researchers, and providing other relevant information, to coastal communities (e.g., relating to climate change, oil spills, marine mammal strandings, fisheries bycatch, coastal community water quality monitoring, harmful algal blooms, invasive species, etc.).

We are pleased to provide you with any additional information that may more specifically clarify the subject budget request, or that more generally explains the vision, mission and accomplishments of the Marine Advisory Program or the Alaska Sea Grant College Program. Please contact Ms. Paula Cullenberg, Alaska Sea Grant MAP Leader (907-274-9692; pcullenberg@uaa.alaska.edu; <http://www.marineadvisory.org>), or Dr. David Christie, Director, Alaska Sea Grant College Program (907-474-7949; david.christie@alaska.edu; <http://seagrant.uaf.edu>), if you have need for further information.

Thank you for your favorable consideration of our request that you please include $614,000 to fund six MAP positions in the FY2011 University of Alaska Operating Budget that you pass out of your committee.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Stephan, Chair
Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee
Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee

Members of the Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee represent an array of stakeholder groups from all regions of Alaska. The Advisory Committee provides valuable guidance in identifying priorities for Alaska Sea Grant’s research, education, and extension activities, in the development of strategic planning efforts and in the review of research proposals.

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