Federal Appropriations for Environmental Education

National Environmental Education Act Programs

**Maintain Level Funding for Fiscal Year 2019**

Please sign the Senate appropriations letter; contact Gil Ruis, Gilbert_Ruiz@gillibrand.senate.gov.

**Our Request**

We urge Congress to again appropriate $8.7 million in FY 2019 for the National Environmental Education Act programs situated in the EPA Office of Environmental Education to support local and national environmental education initiatives. This is level funding with FY 2018.

**Funding for National Environmental Education Act Programs**

Funding for the National Environmental Education Act programs is provided through both the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. We endorse a level appropriation of $8.7 million for the next fiscal year, which is well below the $14 million authorized in 1990. We, along with much of the environmental and STEM education communities, strongly urge continued funding of these important programs.

**The Case for National Environmental Education Act Programs**

- Non-regulatory programs complement/replace other agency functions, with some projects aiming to obviate the need for regulations by facilitating voluntary water and land stewardship by citizens and students.
- The benefits of the program are aimed at local and regional communities, though there is a robust national sharing of best practices during and after the grant activities.
- The NEEA programs completely integrate with and gives context to STEM education in schools.
- The EPA grants are locally peer reviewed and thoroughly evaluated, with only the top few percent of the many quality applications being funded.

**The Individual National Environmental Education Act Programs**

**EPA Office of Environmental Education and Grant Program**

The Environmental Education Grants Program supports environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness about environmental issues, and provide them with the knowledge and skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. The program targets students, teachers, and citizens, and has granted a very modest $2-3 million annually via more than 3,500 grants since 1992. In the last two years, the grants have been focused regionally to build capacity on the state level. A portion of the funds have helped states develop and implement environmental literacy plans, in which nearly every state is currently engaged. **Grant List by State** [www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants](http://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants), click on the “Grants Awarded” tab and scroll down to the map.

**National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)**

NEEF, the only Congressionally chartered nonprofit for environmental education, is a national leader in providing lifelong environmental learning. NEEF connects people to knowledge they can use to improve the quality of their lives and the health of the planet, focusing on areas the public easily connects with in everyday life—weather, work, health, nature, land and education.
● Working with local broadcast meteorologists, delivers environmental education messages on practical ways viewers can have a positive impact on the environment. Environmental education messages reach 90 million households. 4.7 million Spanish speaking households reached with Spanish language environmental education messages.

● Working with businesses, engages employees in sustainability practices throughout a company as part of everyday operations. NEEF employee engagement “best practices reports” were developed with 20 companies representing 4 million employees.

● Trained 50 health care providers as “nature champions,” who in turn trained over 1800 others. These professionals reach an estimated 300,000 patients and their families per year with the message that time outdoors is highly beneficial to their health. [www.neefusa.org](http://www.neefusa.org)

**EE360 - Teacher Training and Capacity-building for the Field.**
The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has launched ee360, a five-year program to strengthen the field by building infrastructure through leadership clinics, developing state certification programs, using technology, expanding access to resources, and understanding the value of environmental education. The project involves these leading partners: NAAEE, Antioch University, the Center for Diversity and the Environment, Earth Force, the NAAEE Affiliate Network, Project Learning Tree, Stanford University, University of Oregon, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM, National Park Service, NOAA, and U.S. Forest Service. The EPA Office of Environmental Education is a funder of this critical program.

[https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/ee360](https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/ee360)

*The initial National Environmental Education Act of 1990 authorization sunsetted after five years, but Congressional champions and/or the President have inserted it as a line item every year since.*

**For More Information**
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