



October 20, 2011

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
And Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
And Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
And Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James P. Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
And Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Reed and Simpson and Ranking Members Murkowski and Moran:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), comprised of 217 public research universities, land-grant institutions, and state university systems across the nation, I thank you for your support for programs impacting both the cultural and physical landscape of the United States, namely the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and water and natural resource research programs at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

As you work to finalize the FY12 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, I encourage you to provide \$155 million for NEH, the Senate draft provided level and the same as the FY11 enacted level. I also urge you to fund the USGS Water Resources Research Institutes (WRRI) and USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units at \$6.5 million and \$19 million respectively, the same as their FY11 enacted levels.

As the largest federal funder of the humanities, NEH is the principal source of funds for humanities research and education, supporting summer seminars and institutes for K-12 teachers and faculty, pre-service training for aspiring teachers, and collaborations between higher education and local school districts. The humanities remain central to the missions of U.S. colleges and universities and the cultural life of the nation.

The higher education community is concerned with the continued erosion of funding for NEH core programs. Further cuts to these competitive funds will have a significant impact on the Endowment's ability to support humanities research and education. There will be consequences not only for our continuing efforts to understand our history, culture, and civic values, but also for our economic competitiveness, as the impact of NEH investments goes beyond the scholars and institutions supported. Our nation's economic success depends on cultivating a broadly educated workforce ready to compete in the knowledge-based, global economy of the 21st century, and NEH helps achieve that goal.

Like NEH, the USGS plays a crucial role in the funding of research and education, with an impact on everyday life. The USGS Water Resources Research Institutes (WRRI) provide invaluable support for applied water research, aiding our understanding of water supply and water quality challenges facing our nation, states, regional, and local communities. Located at U.S. research universities, the WRRI, which leverage non-federal dollars, are the country's single largest training program for the next generation of water scientists, technicians and engineers. As you are aware, water remains the rarest and most precious resource in many parts of the country and this program addresses many of the challenges associated with water.

Similarly, the 40 nationwide USGS Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Units support natural resources research and provide technical assistance to local communities, states, and the nation to help address natural resource management challenges. An important role of the Cooperative Research Unit program, a model of federal-state-university-private partnerships, is the training of graduate students in fisheries and wildlife sciences at the interface of science and resource management. Both the Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Units and the WRRI are small but critical programs to our next generation of water and natural resource scientists. Their activities have a direct bearing on the livelihoods of people in vast parts of the nation every day.

I thank you for your consideration of our views and recommendations. We stand ready to work with you as appropriations process proceeds.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Thad Cochran
House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Norman D. Dicks