

Sanctuary Advisory Council

GULF OF THE FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

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March 27, 2012

To: Jane Lubchenco
NOAA Administrator
Copy: Louisa Koch
NOAA Office of Education Director

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

As chair of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (GFNMS) Advisory Council I am writing on behalf of the council to thank you for restoring California Bay-Wetlands Education and Training (B-WET) funds to the current fiscal year budget. As you know the deletion of these funds from last year's budget was a great loss to our local schools. B-WET funding provides a unique opportunity for the GFNMS to implement the best ideas originating from K – 12 teachers in our area. B-WET helps to shape teacher environmental and science programs to more effectively serve students at the elementary and high school level.

Examples of the effectiveness of B-WET grants in the San Francisco Bay Area during FY2010 are as follows:¹

- 6420 students and 357 teachers from 23 schools participated in B-WET environmental and science projects
- Numerous recycling projects were initiated at bay area schools that resulted in 47,127 pounds of trash recycled, 203 recycling bins and 113 compost bins placed on school grounds
- 75,832 square feet of non native plants were removed from school and community sites
- 241 native trees were planted on school or community grounds
- 3,794 native perennial plants were planted on school or community grounds

B-WET programs do much more than teach environmental stewardship. At Alvarado Elementary School in Union City, California, 67% of 5th graders were failing standardized state testing in the sciences. Four years later after participating in innovative, experiential B-WET funded programs, 75% had become proficient in science, a 127% turnaround in science scores!² Students have told teachers at the school that because of

B-WET programs they “love science, want to be scientists and that science is their favorite subject.”

The thousands of students who participate in B-WET programs each year come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including many from economically disadvantaged and underserved communities. Through B-WET grants these students were able to participate in meaningful environmental and science orientated programs that may not have otherwise been available to them.

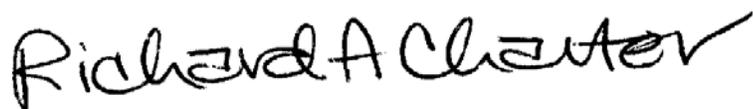
B-WET funds in the area that the GFNMS serves:¹

- increase teacher confidence in their ability to teach science
- teach environmental stewardship to elementary school children
- increase student awareness of watershed issues and their effects on the oceans
- increase student interest in learning more about the oceans
- help both teacher and student identify ways watersheds can be polluted
- boost the quality of life in the local community

The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is committed to enhancing environmental and science literacy in the northern California counties it serves. We applaud this year’s funding and strongly urge that it be continued in subsequent years at levels consistent with funding equal to FY2010.

Thank you for continuing NOAA’s partnership with local schools and their adjacent communities through the California B-WET grant program.

Sincerely,



Richard Charter
Sanctuary Advisory Council Chair

1 Source: Seaberry Nachbar, CA B-WET Coordinator, from FY2010 funded awards

2 Source: Kimberly Pratt, Alvarado Elementary School, letter dated September 1, 2010

