



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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NEW JERSEY SEA GRANT PROGRAM GETS FEDERAL FUNDING GO-AHEAD AND THUMBS UP FROM SENATORS LAUTENBERG AND MENENDEZ

(Sandy Hook, NJ)..... The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has officially awarded the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium (NJMSC) more than \$1 million in federal funds to support two separate initiatives: the New Jersey Sea Grant College Program and a study of the disease resistance of oysters.

Matching funds from the State of New Jersey and private sector partners will bring the *New Jersey Sea Grant College Program's* total operating budget for 2008-2009 to more than \$1.5 million. The federal grant will sponsor 5 major research projects and more than a dozen extension and education programs and special projects involving scientists, academic personnel, graduate students, staff specialists and professionals from the private sector. The projects will be managed by the Sandy Hook based New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium (NJMSC), which has overseen the *New Jersey Sea Grant College Program* since 1974.

"These funds help ensure that the New Jersey Sea Grant Program will continue to provide environmental and educational benefits to our coastal communities, as well as preserve

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our oyster population and its influence on our state's economy," said Sen. Frank Lautenberg. "We need to do all we can to keep New Jersey at the forefront of ocean and coastal research, and these grants go a long way in that effort."

"Our state stands to gain both environmentally and economically from the Sea Grant program," said Sen. Robert Menendez. "These grants will provide scientists the resources to carry out important research on our oceans and coastal zone and to make better choices about how to use New Jersey's coastal resources, in the process protecting our state's valuable oyster population."

According to Dr. Michael P. Weinstein, President of NJMSC and Director of its Sea Grant Program, "This award confirms NOAA's commitment to coastal states like New Jersey to sustaining and conserving marine resources and recognition of the economy it supports. In New Jersey, maritime resources, coastal tourism, habitat restoration and fisheries and aquaculture are critical components of our state economy. Add the pharmaceutical industry with its interest in potential products from the sea, and it's easy to see why Sea Grant is so important to New Jersey." Weinstein also noted that, "The entire New Jersey Congressional delegation and both its Senators have historically supported the Federal reauthorization of Sea Grant and are gratefully acknowledged for their efforts. So too are we grateful to Governor Corzine who supported the matching grant from New Jersey and his Cabinet Members and the legislature for such strong support of many of our programs."

Research themes will include ecosystems and environmental models focusing on fisheries habitat, water and sediment quality, coastal processes and marine biotechnology. The Federal funding will also support the work of the New Jersey Sea Grant Extension Program

(NJSGEP) whose staff assists state residents in the areas that include commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, marine recreation, coastal tourism, and coastal ecosystem health. Other special activities funded by the grant include communications and public information outreach, and K-12 and public education programs.

In total, NJMSC will receive \$1,082,553 as part of the two federal grants. \$939,548 will be used to help New Jersey Sea Grant conduct its 2008 Program activities which include research, education and outreach to gain a better understanding of the oceans and coastal zone and to better utilize the state's coastal resources. The other grant, in the amount of \$143,005, will fund a study on the disease resistance of New Jersey's oyster population. NJMSC was founded in 1969 and is one of the largest alliances of its kind in the United States, boasting a membership of nearly two dozen colleges and universities.

For information about NJMSC and New Jersey Sea Grant activities and resource products, visit njmsc.org.

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