

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 66

BY REPRESENTATIVE ZERINGUE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to continue to provide appropriate and sufficient funding for the National Sea Grant College Program.

WHEREAS, the National Sea Grant College Program, a network of thirty-three sea grant colleges and universities, was created in 1966 by the United States Congress in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the United States Department of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, the colleges and universities designated under the National Sea Grant College Program were so designated because they were involved in scientific research, education, training, and extension projects and programs that were aimed at preservation and practical development of coastal resources, including those along the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS, the Act that created the National Sea Grant College Program stated that the program was to support education, research, and extension by "Encouraging and developing programs consisting of instruction, practical demonstrations, publications, and otherwise, by sea grant colleges and other suitable institutes, laboratories, and public and private agencies through marine advisory programs with the object of imparting useful information to persons currently employed or interested in the various fields related to the development of marine resources, the scientific community, and the general public."; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Louisiana Sea Grant, located at Louisiana State University, was designated as the thirteenth sea grant college and in its most recent program review conducted by the National Sea Grant Office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was rated as ". . . exceeds expectations by a substantial margin in some areas/aspects."; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Sea Grant, similar to the agricultural extension or "county agent" program of the United States Department of Agriculture, provides many educational and support services to local coastal communities and businesses, including our state's commercial fishermen; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, Louisiana Sea Grant activities in the state resulted in \$17.7 million in economic benefits, the establishment of nearly one hundred twenty businesses, and the educational experiences of nearly twenty-nine thousand students in our elementary and secondary schools; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Sea Grant was also able to assist twenty-four communities in the development and implementation of sustainable economic and environmental practices to the benefit of those communities and their citizens; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Sea Grant has been a part of the first response to many coastal crises including hurricanes, floods, and even the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, and the Louisiana Sea Grant has been an essential part of the short-term and long-term recovery from those disasters by local coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Sea Grant annually reaches more than twenty-five thousand of our state's kindergarten through twelfth grade schoolchildren through professional development for teachers and development of student coastal stewardship activities and has supported more than twelve hundred graduate and undergraduate students in their quest for applicable degrees and research opportunities, furthering the mission of Louisiana Sea Grant to impart ". . . useful information to persons currently employed or interested in the various fields related to the development of marine resources, the scientific community, and the general public"; and

WHEREAS, one of the programs slated to be cut by \$30 million in the Fiscal Year 2018 President's budget request is the National Sea Grant College Program with an additional Fiscal Year 2019 budget proposal that would eliminate funding for the Sea Grant program entirely; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2018 proposed cut would eliminate the remaining budget for the National Sea Grant College Program this year and, if adopted, would terminate the National Sea Grant Office on the day such a budget cut became effective; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Sea Grant provides vital services to the state of Louisiana and its citizens through the scientific research, education, training, and extension projects and programs that are aimed at preservation and practical development of coastal resources and the loss of these services would deal a devastating blow to communities already stressed due to the magnitude of coastal loss and repeated natural disasters, such as hurricanes and flooding.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to continue to provide appropriate and sufficient funding for the National Sea Grant College Program, including that for Louisiana Sea Grant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE