

**Statement of Chairwoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Legislative Hearing Regarding the National Sea Grant
College Program Act Amendments of 2008
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans
Thursday, April 3, 2008**

The Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans meets this morning to hear testimony regarding H.R. 5618, The National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2008.

The National Sea Grant College Program is a nationwide network of over 300 university and research institutions, supporting a wide range of applied and basic marine science research, education, training, and technical assistance programs that promote the understanding and better utilization of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources.

I introduced the National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2008, H.R. 5618, to reauthorize the National Sea Grant College Program and implement improvements to the program recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. These include increasing the interaction between the National Sea Grant Office and the individual programs; improving programmatic performance reviews; and strengthening strategic planning. The planning process enhancements in the bill also reflect the national priorities contained in the Administration's Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy.

As highlighted by the Pew Oceans Commission and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, more than half the U.S. population lives in coastal counties. As the

need for better information, education and outreach in these communities has steadily increased, however, Sea Grant funding has not kept pace. Therefore, the authorized funding levels in H.R. 5618 would increase incrementally from \$66 million to \$100 million for the period between Fiscal Year 2009 through Fiscal Year 2014. This is a significant yet measured improvement over the approximately \$57 million that the program has been allocated over recent years.

I'm grateful that several colleagues who serve on this Subcommittee have cosponsored H.R. 5618, including Mr. Brown, Mr. Faleomaveaga, Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Pallone, Mr. Saxton and Mr. Gilchrest. I look forward to working with you and all the Members of the Subcommittee to reauthorize and strengthen this important marine science and outreach program.