

DRAFT

April __, 2025

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

We greatly appreciate your past support for the National Environmental Education Act (NEEA), including providing \$9.5 million in Fiscal Year 2025 as a provision in the Continuing Resolution. We ask that you continue funding this successful program at the current level of \$9.5 million in Fiscal Year 2026.

As you make your funding decisions, we ask that you consider the following:

- NEEA programs are essential to educating millions of Americans, including students, with science-based environmental information. Quality environmental education programs help develop an environmentally literate citizenry that can compete in our global economy.
- NEEA funding allows the EPA to engage in education efforts with local communities and the private sector to enhance public understanding of how to address complex environmental challenges.
- Environmental education spurs action to create healthy, livable communities that are more resilient and attract jobs for all Americans.
- Since 1990, NEEA has been a highly effective, non-regulatory tool for improving student performance in science and math and protecting public health.
- Congress has consistently funded this program, which has been strongly supported by local communities, public health officials, educators, and industry.
- NEEA helps build 21st century skills and promote job training, innovation, and leadership skills.
- The Act utilizes public-private partnerships to highly leverage scarce federal resources.

Programs funded through this act have far-reaching and well-documented positive impacts. They provide practical applications for math, science, technology, and engineering education. Research indicates that this type of education increases critical thinking and the problem-solving skills necessary to foster innovation and keep America competitive in a fiercely global economy.

With support from the NEEA, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has partnered with more than 20 companies, including Toyota, International Paper, 3M, and Samsung to create nationwide conservation events that generate millions of dollars in volunteer work. NEEF partners with sports leagues such as the NBA and NHL, museums, zoos and aquaria to prompt fans and audiences to take actions at home that result in a cleaner and safer environment.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) helps ensure that by the time students graduate high school they are equipped with the knowledge to address pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. Project Learning Tree (PLT), a program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, engages students in learning about trees, forests, and sustainable forest management.

NEEA Grants have been awarded in all 50 states, the territories, and the District of Columbia, totaling more than 4,000 grants that support high-quality, high-impact educational programs that address local priorities and needs. They are effective because they allow students to apply science in a real-world context and perform better on standardized tests in reading, math, writing, social studies, and science. This helps America close the education gap with other countries.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to fund NEEA programs according to the formula in PL 101-619 at \$9.5 million for Fiscal Year 2026.

Sincerely,