

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2026

The Honorable Mike Simpson

Chairman

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 2026. We ask that you continue funding this successful program at the current level of \$9.5 million in Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27).

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

- NEEA helps build 21st century skills and promote job training, innovation, and leadership skills. Research shows that American corporations and small and medium sized enterprises place a high premium on finding employees with skills in energy and waste management, community safety, and future-focused product and service development.
- Since 1990, NEEA has been a highly effective, non-regulatory and voluntary tool for promoting environmental stewardship and also improving student performance in science and math and protecting public health.
- 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.
- Congress has consistently funded this program, which has been strongly supported by local communities, public health officials, educators, and industry.
- The Act utilizes public-private partnerships and via fund-matching, increases private investments in environmental education to more effectively 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.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) helps ensure that by the time students graduate high school they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address pressing 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.

With support from NEEA, the Congressionally-chartered National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) has partnered with the private sector to create nationwide conservation events that generate millions of dollars of volunteer work—\$10.6 million in FY25 alone. This year, NEEF is a founding partner of America250, helping turn the nation’s 250th anniversary into a moment of shared service. National Public Lands Day, administered by NEEF, is part of the America Gives campaign to generate the largest volunteer effort in U.S. history.

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 2027.

Sincerely,

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