

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

The Trump administration is proposing to eliminate Federal funding for the National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant). This is a bad idea. Sea Grant is vital! For fifty years, Sea Grant has been helping businesses and communities deal with the challenges inherent in using coastal resources while protecting their long-term sustainability.

Sea Grant is a joint federal-state investment that supports the health and resilience of the nation's coastal communities, yielding quantifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits at the national, regional, state, and local levels. Housed within NOAA, Sea Grant sends 95 percent of its appropriated funds to coastal states to solve problems identified as critical by the public and private sectors of our nation's coastal communities. This is done through cost-effective partnerships among state universities, NOAA, coastal communities, and businesses who all share in the costs of solutions, thus leveraging nearly \$3 for every \$1 appropriated by Congress. There may be other federal programs that are bloated, or whose work has little impact on everyday Americans, but Sea Grant is not among them. This small but highly impactful program, uniquely federally funded but locally directed, should be grown.

Sea Grant has served and continues to serve a wide variety of coastal stakeholders. New York Sea Grant conducts workshops and trainings vital for over 114,000 boaters, recreational fishing-related businesses, and anglers annually. Sea Grant works hand-in-glove with marine recreational businesses, for-hire boats, and bait and tackle shops, to develop innovative marketing approaches to secure a steady stream of clientele at a time when some say participation rates in marine recreational fishing are declining. New York Sea Grant offers certifications for lifesaving safety for commercial anglers and boaters ensuring that those who leave the dock return to

the dock. After Sandy, Sea Grant worked with marina operators to access the disaster relief and rebuilding funds that became available. As a charter boat captain, the safety of my passengers and crew is paramount and is dependent on accurate weather information. Sea Grant's work on issues of coastal hazards, severe storms, and shoreline resilience is critical.

I remember the days of plentiful Peconic Bay scallops before the brown tide outbreak of the mid-1980s. I am grateful for Sea Grant's invaluable work investigating the causes of harmful algal blooms that affect the health of our bays. Halting Sea Grant's seafood safety training for seafood businesses or ceasing to implement a new Sea Grant certificate program to serve thousands of small businesses and aquaculture start-ups would be great losses indeed.

Although these are my home waters, I've chartered all along the eastern seaboard from New England to Puerto Rico — all coastlines served by Sea Grant programs whose mission is to serve coastal stakeholders with science-based information crucial to our ocean's ecosystem health and future. Their work must continue.

Yours,

Suzanne "Suky" Cannon
USCG 100GT Master Mariner Captain



Dear Editor,

I am a graduate student at the University of New Hampshire seeking help from recreational boaters for my master's thesis on Crowd-sourced bathymetry.

The issue. Accurate bathymetric maps are vital for all of us who travel on the ocean. In the US (and often elsewhere), many of the soundings used for the current nautical charts of our ever-changing ocean floor were taken over 100 years ago, and the areas in need of being mapped greatly outweigh our current capabilities. Ideally, we would have modern, professionally collected, hydrographic data everywhere, but this is prohibitively expensive. It's unlikely to ever be the case.

How can Crowd-Sourced Bathymetry help? Crowd-sourced

bathymetry could be part of the solution to maintaining up-to-date maps of our local waters. Through crowd-sourced bathymetry, we — the boaters, sailors, anglers, and others that go to sea — can help ourselves, and each other collectively, by contributing the data that we collect anyway from our navigation echosounders or other instruments to a common effort to improve the needed maps. Instead of disappearing after their immediate use, these data can contribute to knowledge of our oceans and bays. The goal is to allow everyone to enjoy their voyages while also contributing to the accuracy of our maps without any extra effort.

What can YOU do to help? Recreational mariners are the key participants in this exciting program, so we need your feedback about how to create the most efficient and easy-to-use data collection system and methods. To provide your invaluable input, you can participate with the survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/maptheseas. The more responses we get, the better program we can design, so please share among your boating friends.

Thank you for your support: your feedback is helping us find a solution to maintaining up-to-date maps of our waters!

Sincerely,

Shannon Hoy
Master's Student in Ocean Mapping
Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping (CCOM) Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping (CCOM)

CALLING ALL SEAGOERS!
Do you want to reveal what lies beneath your local waters?
Help us with our research to map the seas and become a
Citizen Scientist by participating in this short survey today!
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/maptheseas>
Questions? Contact us at CSBSurvey@ccom.unh.edu

Interested in other ocean mapping projects?
Check out our website at www.ccom.unh.edu