

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 16, 2012

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related  
Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related  
Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Mikulski, Vice Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Hutchison:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we request that you include sufficient funding to preserve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory, located in Sandy Hook, New Jersey. The President's FY 2013 budget proposed closing the facility, threatening the vital research and jobs the laboratory provides.

For over fifty years, the James J. Howard Laboratory has been a national leader on fisheries and marine science. Specifically, the laboratory is part of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, which provides invaluable research on fisheries, marine ecology, and climate change impacts. This research is vital to maintaining healthy fisheries throughout the Northeast, including New Jersey's \$168 million fishing industry, as well as protecting our fragile marine ecosystems.

Nearly forty scientists work today at the Howard Laboratory due to its unique geography and research facilities. Its eleven seawater laboratories, including a 32,000 gallon aquarium, allow scientists to study the feeding, reproduction, migration, life habits, and other behavior of coastal marine species under controlled conditions. The laboratory also operates multiple research vessels and administers joint research projects with universities.

We recognize that mandatory spending cuts will require difficult decisions. However, eliminating funding for this facility is a short-sighted decision that will not restore fiscal security, but will eliminate jobs and undermine important research. We urge you to provide the funding necessary to ensure this important facility continues operating in Sandy Hook, New Jersey.

Sincerely,

  
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG

  
ROBERT MENENDEZ