



## Press Release

Contact:  
Tom Zolper  
443-482-2066

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For immediate release

### **Prospect of Student Achievement, Green Jobs Produces Bi-partisan Bill** *COALITION OF 50 MILLION PEOPLE SUPPORTS ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY BILL*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Bi-partisan legislation introduced in Congress today would support the surging environmental education movement, improve student achievement, and prepare students for jobs in the growing green economy.

A coalition of business, education, environmental and other groups representing 50 million Americans applauded the introduction in the Senate and House of the historic [No Child Left Inside Act](#) (NCLI), a bi-partisan bill sponsored by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), Senator Mark Kirk (R-Illinois), and Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD), among others, which helps states boost environmental literacy.

“Passing the No Child Left Inside Act is a key step in improving the quality of our children’s education, and preparing them for the complex challenges of the future workforce,” Senator Reed said.

“Environmental education must be a part of the formal pre-K-12 education system if we are to fully prepare students to become lifelong stewards of our natural resources and compete in a green economy,” Congressman Sarbanes said.

“Our education system needs new, innovative approaches to prepare our children to compete in the 21st century global economy. This bill encourages hands-on learning and an integrated curriculum, while bolstering increasingly important science education programs,” Senator Kirk said.

Environmental education is gaining popularity across the country (see links below to find statistics and local examples). In June, Maryland became the first state in the country to require school systems to ensure that students are environmentally literate when they graduate from high school. Maryland has the best school system in the country, according to Education Week magazine. But children in some states benefit more than children in other states. Many states are looking for help to implement environmental literacy plans, and to train and prepare educators.

(MORE)

The bi-partisan No Child Left Inside Act provides incentives to states to implement environmental literacy programs that support outdoor learning activities at schools and outdoor centers as well as professional development for teachers.

Environmental education uses the natural world as a context and tool for learning, much as you would use a science lab. Environmental education does not teach students what to think about issues, merely provides resources to help them understand and act in the world.

Research shows that when environmental education is integrated into the curriculum, student achievement increases in core academic areas including science, technology, engineering and math—STEM subjects. Students who succeed in these courses improve their career and earning potential.

A new economy is emerging that offers tremendous opportunities to create jobs in manufacturing, transportation, construction, services, energy, and other sectors. The global market for environmental products and services alone—renewable energy generation and energy efficiency, recycling and waste management, water supply, and other resource management—is projected to double by 2020.

“At Norfolk Southern, we believe that an environmentally aware workforce is essential to the success of our company as well as the global economy,” said Charles “Wick” Moorman, CEO for Norfolk Southern Corporation which is a member of the [The No Child Left Inside Coalition](#). “Environmental literacy is an important factor in preparing our young people to address the environmental challenges and opportunities for innovation that lie ahead.”

Society also benefits from environmental education. We face increasing environmental challenges. A knowledgeable and motivated citizenry is more apt to find solutions to those challenges.

“With critical environmental issues looming on the horizon, we should be reminded not to take environmental education for granted,” said Don Baugh, Chesapeake Bay Foundation Vice President for Education and Director of the No Child Left Inside Coalition. “There is nothing like hands-on environmental education to engage children and pique their curiosity. We are grateful to Senator Kirk, Senator Reed and Congressman Sarbanes for their bi-partisan leadership in championing an issue that is so fundamental to our long-term success in educating the next generation of environmental stewards.”

Other members of the coalition praised the bill’s introduction:

“This will help the American K-12 education system foster innovation and interest in science, technology, engineering and math (the ‘STEM’ fields), which is crucial to keep our workforce competitive in rapidly emerging world markets,” said from Kevin Coyle, Vice President for Education and Training at the National Wildlife Federation This legislation will make America stronger, support job creation and prepare the next generation to guide us through environmental challenges and a changing economy.”

“Ducks Unlimited has always been a strong supporter of outdoor youth education because these kinds of programs provide an opportunity for children to be introduced to the joys of hunting, angling and other nature-related activities,” Ducks Unlimited CEO Dale Hall said. “In order to keep America’s great conservation legacy alive, it is important we educate children about waterfowl and other wildlife, as well as the habitats they live in.”

Forty states have already used gubernatorial executive orders, state laws or other concrete actions to urge the development of statewide environmental literacy plans, and outdoor plans and strategies.

Other signs of the popularity of environmental education are abundant:

- More than 900 schools nationwide are participating in Project Learning Tree’s *GreenSchools!* program. Through service-learning, students use their knowledge from science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects to investigate environmental issues at their school and complete action projects that result in more sustainable and healthy learning environments. More than 30,000 teachers a year receive training in Project Learning Tree’s environmental education curriculum. [More information](#)
- The number of high school students taking the Advanced Placement Environmental Science course jumped 426 percent in the past 10 years compared to an average increase of 97 percent for all AP subject exams over the same period. [More information](#)
- At least 200 green charters schools have opened across the country in recent years using a research-based curriculum called EIC, or Environment as an Integrating Context for learning. The idea involves using nature and the environment as a teaching tool for everything from math to reading to history. [More information](#)

The No Child Left Inside Coalition includes over 2,000 organizational members around the country—representing more than 50 million individuals. The coalition will be actively supporting the legislation throughout the country.

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