

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3637

To direct the Secretary of Education to provide grants to establish and evaluate sustainability programs, charged with developing and implementing integrated environmental, economic and social sustainability initiatives, and to direct the Secretary of Education to convene a summit of higher education experts in the area of sustainability.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. WU, and Mr. BOUCHER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to provide grants to establish and evaluate sustainability programs, charged with developing and implementing integrated environmental, economic and social sustainability initiatives, and to direct the Secretary of Education to convene a summit of higher education experts in the area of sustainability.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Higher Education Sus-
5 tainability Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The environmental life-support systems vital
4 to the Nation’s economic and social prosperity are
5 increasingly at risk.

6 (2) The Nation’s institutions of higher edu-
7 cation have a unique role to play in fostering new
8 knowledge, evaluating policies, and discovering new
9 technologies to address the persistent and often
10 linked environmental, social, and economic problems
11 that exist.

12 (3) Achieving more sustainable environmental,
13 economic and social systems will require new re-
14 search, education and technology development, and
15 innovative policy approaches that are flexible and
16 use market mechanisms while engaging relevant
17 stakeholders from the private and public sectors.

18 (4) For the Nation to remain competitive in
19 this global world of increasingly limited natural re-
20 sources, higher education institutions need to take
21 immediate steps to create new research, education
22 and technology development that reflect the frame-
23 work of sustainability.

24 (5) The Nation’s higher education institutions
25 also are uniquely positioned to prepare the future
26 labor force for addressing threats to, and seeking

1 opportunities for economic, environmental, and so-
2 cial sustainability.

3 (6) The Nation's higher education institutions
4 are places where approaches that integrate the envi-
5 ronmental, social and economic dimensions can be
6 designed, tested, and refined for application to real
7 world settings in collaboration with industry, govern-
8 ment and the nonprofit sector.

9 (7) The Nation's higher education institutions
10 are uniquely situated to be models of sustainable
11 management and operations that can provide exam-
12 ples to industry and government of operational
13 strategies that integrate the basic principles of envi-
14 ronmental, economic, and social sustainability.

15 (8) Numerous State governors, including those
16 of Oregon, Washington, New Jersey, and California
17 have issued executive orders for the development of
18 State sustainability plans.

19 (9) Hundreds of college campuses have already
20 made commitments to sustainable practices and less-
21 ening their carbon footprint, but lack a cohesive
22 plan.

23 (10) Additionally, many campuses now offer
24 courses on sustainability, but no comprehensive sys-
25 tem exists to evaluate and compare colleges and uni-

1 versities in terms of overall sustainability related
2 academic programs and practices.

3 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

4 (1) to provide support to faculty, staff, and stu-
5 dents at institutions of higher education to establish
6 administrative and academic sustainability programs
7 on campus and a means to measure their effective-
8 ness;

9 (2) to promote and enhance research by faculty
10 and students at institutions of higher education in
11 sustainability practices and innovations that assist
12 and improve sustainability; and

13 (3) to provide support to institutions of higher
14 education to work with community partners from the
15 business, government, and nonprofit sectors to de-
16 sign and implement sustainability programs for ap-
17 plication in the community and workplace.

18 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.**

19 Title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 is
20 amended by adding at the end the following new part:

1 **“PART E—UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABILITY**
2 **PROGRAMS**
3 **“Subpart 1—Sustainability Planning Grants**

4 **“SEC. 771. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

5 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, from the
6 funds appropriated under section 776, make grants to eli-
7 gible entities to establish sustainability programs to design
8 and implement sustainability practices including in the
9 areas of energy management, green building, waste man-
10 agement, purchasing, transportation, and toxics manage-
11 ment, and other aspects of sustainability that integrate
12 campus operations with multidisciplinary academic pro-
13 grams and are applicable to the private and government
14 sectors.

15 “(b) PERIOD OF GRANT.—The provision of payments
16 under a grant under subsection (a) may extend over a pe-
17 riod of not more than 4 fiscal years.

18 “(c) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—For pur-
19 poses of this part, the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

20 “(1) an institution of higher education that
21 grants 2 or 4-year undergraduate degrees, or mas-
22 ters and doctoral degrees, or both; or

23 “(2) a non-profit consortia, association, alli-
24 ance, or collaboration operating in partnership with
25 one or more institutions of higher education that re-

1 ceived funds for the implementation of work associ-
2 ated with sustainability programs under this part.

3 **“SEC. 772. APPLICATIONS.**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under section
5 771(a), an eligible entity shall submit an application to
6 the Secretary at such time, in such form, and containing
7 such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

8 “(b) ASSURANCES.—Such application shall include
9 assurances that the eligible entity—

10 “(1) has developed or shall develop a plan, in-
11 cluding an evaluation component, for the program
12 component established pursuant to section 773;

13 “(2) shall use Federal funds received from a
14 grant under section 771(a) to supplement, not sup-
15 plant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be
16 available for projects funded under such section;

17 “(3) shall provide, with respect to any fiscal
18 year in which such entity receives funds from a
19 grant under section 771(a), non-Federal funds or an
20 in-kind contribution in an amount equal to 20 per-
21 cent of funds from such grant, for the purpose of
22 carrying out the program component established in
23 section 773; and

1 “(4) shall collaborate with business, govern-
2 ment, and the nonprofit sectors in the development
3 and implementation of its sustainability plan.

4 **“SEC. 773. USE OF FUNDS.**

5 “(a) INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS.—Grants made
6 under section 771 may be used by an eligible entity that
7 is an individual institution of higher education for the fol-
8 lowing purposes:

9 “(1) To develop and implement administrative
10 and operations practices at institutions of higher
11 education that test, model, and analyze principles of
12 sustainability.

13 “(2) To establish multidisciplinary education,
14 research, and outreach programs at institutions of
15 higher education that address the environmental, so-
16 cial, and economic dimensions of sustainability.

17 “(3) To support research and teaching initia-
18 tives that focus on multidisciplinary and integrated
19 environmental, economic, and social elements.

20 “(4) To establish initiatives in the areas of en-
21 ergy management, green building, waste manage-
22 ment, purchasing, toxics management, transpor-
23 tation, and other aspects of sustainability.

1 “(5) To support student, faculty, and staff
2 work at institutions of higher education to imple-
3 ment, research, and evaluate sustainable practices.

4 “(6) To establish sustainability literacy as a re-
5 quirement for undergraduate and graduate degree
6 programs.

7 “(7) To integrate sustainability curriculum in
8 all programs of instruction, particularly in business,
9 architecture, technology, manufacturing, engineer-
10 ing, and science programs.

11 “(b) PARTNERSHIPS.—Grants made under section
12 771 may be used by an eligible entity that is a non-profit
13 consortia, association, alliance, or collaboration operating
14 as a partnership with one or more institutions of higher
15 education for the following purposes:

16 “(1) To conduct faculty, staff and/or adminis-
17 trator training on the subjects of sustainability and
18 institutional change.

19 “(2) To compile, evaluate and disseminate best
20 practices, case studies, guidelines and standards.

21 “(3) To conduct efforts to engage external
22 stakeholders such as business, alumni, and accred-
23 iting agencies in the process of building support for
24 research, education and technology development for
25 sustainability.

1 “(4) To conduct professional development pro-
2 grams for faculty in all disciplines to enable faculty
3 to incorporate sustainability content in their courses.

4 “(5) To enable an appropriate non-profit con-
5 sortia, association, alliance, or collaboration oper-
6 ating in partnership with an institution of higher
7 education to create the analytical tools necessary for
8 institutions of higher education to assess and meas-
9 ure their individual progress toward fully sustainable
10 campus operations and fully integrating sustain-
11 ability into the curriculum.

12 “(6) To develop educational benchmarks for in-
13 stitutions of higher education to determine the nec-
14 essary rigor and effectiveness of academic sustain-
15 ability programs.

16 **“SEC. 774. REPORTS.**

17 “An eligible entity that receives a grant under section
18 771(a) shall submit to the Secretary, for each fiscal year
19 in which the entity receives amounts from such grant, a
20 report that describes the work conducted pursuant to sec-
21 tion 773, research findings and publications, administra-
22 tive savings experienced, and an evaluation of the pro-
23 gram.

1 **“SEC. 775. ALLOCATION REQUIREMENT.**

2 “The Secretary may not make grants under section
3 771(a) to any eligible entity in a total amount that is less
4 than \$250,000 or more than \$2,000,000.

5 **“SEC. 776. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
7 priated to carry out section 771(a), \$50,000,000 for fiscal
8 year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each
9 of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

10 “(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated under
11 subsection (a) are authorized to remain available until ex-
12 pended.

13 **“Subpart 2—Summit on Sustainability**

14 **“SEC. 781. SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY.**

15 “Not later than September 30, 2008, the Secretary
16 of Education shall convene a summit of higher education
17 experts working in the area of sustainable operations and
18 programs, representatives from agencies of the Federal
19 Government, and business and industry leaders to focus
20 on efforts of national distinction that—

21 “(1) encourage faculty, staff, and students at
22 institutions of higher education to establish adminis-
23 trative and academic sustainability programs on
24 campus;

25 “(2) enhance research by faculty and students
26 at institutions of higher education in sustainability

1 practices and innovations that assist and improve
2 sustainability;

3 “(3) encourage institutions of higher education
4 to work with community partners from the business,
5 government, and nonprofit sectors to design and im-
6 plement sustainability programs for application in
7 the community and workplace;

8 “(4) identify opportunities for partnerships in-
9 volving institutions of higher education and the Fed-
10 eral Government to expand sustainable operations
11 and academic programs focused on environmental
12 and economic sustainability; and

13 “(5) charge the summit participants or steering
14 committee to submit a set of recommendations for
15 addressing sustainability through institutions of
16 higher education.”.

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