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. B LUMENAUER (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.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2007”.

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SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

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

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

(2) The Nation’s institutions of higher education have a unique role to play in fostering new knowledge, evaluating policies, and discovering new technologies to address the persistent and often linked environmental, social, and economic problems that exist.

(3) Achieving more sustainable environmental, economic and social systems will require new research, education and technology development, and innovative policy approaches that are flexible and use market mechanisms while engaging relevant stakeholders from the private and public sectors.

(4) For the Nation to remain competitive in this global world of increasingly limited natural resources, higher education institutions need to take immediate steps to create new research, education and technology development that reflect the framework of sustainability.

(5) The Nation’s higher education institutions also are uniquely positioned to prepare the future labor force for addressing threats to, and seeking
opportunities for economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

(6) The Nation’s higher education institutions are places where approaches that integrate the environmental, social and economic dimensions can be designed, tested, and refined for application to real world settings in collaboration with industry, government and the nonprofit sector.

(7) The Nation’s higher education institutions are uniquely situated to be models of sustainable management and operations that can provide examples to industry and government of operational strategies that integrate the basic principles of environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

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

(9) Hundreds of college campuses have already made commitments to sustainable practices and lessening their carbon footprint, but lack a cohesive plan.

(10) Additionally, many campuses now offer courses on sustainability, but no comprehensive system exists to evaluate and compare colleges and uni—
versities in terms of overall sustainability related
academic programs and practices.

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

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

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

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

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.

Title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 is
amended by adding at the end the following new part:
“PART E—UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABILITY

PROGRAMS

“Subpart 1—Sustainability Planning Grants

“SEC. 771. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

“(a) In General.—The Secretary shall, from the funds appropriated under section 776, make grants to eligible entities to establish sustainability programs to design and implement sustainability practices including in the areas of energy management, green building, waste management, purchasing, transportation, and toxics management, and other aspects of sustainability that integrate campus operations with multidisciplinary academic programs and are applicable to the private and government sectors.

“(b) Period of Grant.—The provision of payments under a grant under subsection (a) may extend over a period of not more than 4 fiscal years.

“(c) Definition of Eligible Entities.—For purposes of this part, the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(1) an institution of higher education that grants 2 or 4-year undergraduate degrees, or masters and doctoral degrees, or both; or

“(2) a non-profit consortia, association, alliance, or collaboration operating in partnership with one or more institutions of higher education that re-
ceived funds for the implementation of work associ-
ated with sustainability programs under this part.

“SEC. 772. APPLICATIONS.

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

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

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

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

“(3) shall provide, with respect to any fiscal
year in which such entity receives funds from a
grant under section 771(a), non-Federal funds or an
in-kind contribution in an amount equal to 20 per-
cent of funds from such grant, for the purpose of
carrying out the program component established in
section 773; and
“(4) shall collaborate with business, government, and the nonprofit sectors in the development and implementation of its sustainability plan.

"SEC. 773. USE OF FUNDS.

“(a) INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS.—Grants made under section 771 may be used by an eligible entity that is an individual institution of higher education for the following purposes:

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

“(2) To establish multidisciplinary education, research, and outreach programs at institutions of higher education that address the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability.

“(3) To support research and teaching initiatives that focus on multidisciplinary and integrated environmental, economic, and social elements.

“(4) To establish initiatives in the areas of energy management, green building, waste management, purchasing, toxics management, transportation, and other aspects of sustainability.
“(5) To support student, faculty, and staff work at institutions of higher education to implement, research, and evaluate sustainable practices.

“(6) To establish sustainability literacy as a requirement for undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

“(7) To integrate sustainability curriculum in all programs of instruction, particularly in business, architecture, technology, manufacturing, engineering, and science programs.

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

“(1) To conduct faculty, staff and/or administrator training on the subjects of sustainability and institutional change.

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

“(3) To conduct efforts to engage external stakeholders such as business, alumni, and accrediting agencies in the process of building support for research, education and technology development for sustainability.
“(4) To conduct professional development programs for faculty in all disciplines to enable faculty to incorporate sustainability content in their courses.

“(5) To enable an appropriate non-profit consortia, association, alliance, or collaboration operating in partnership with an institution of higher education to create the analytical tools necessary for institutions of higher education to assess and measure their individual progress toward fully sustainable campus operations and fully integrating sustainability into the curriculum.

“(6) To develop educational benchmarks for institutions of higher education to determine the necessary rigor and effectiveness of academic sustainability programs.

“SEC. 774. REPORTS.

“An eligible entity that receives a grant under section 771(a) shall submit to the Secretary, for each fiscal year in which the entity receives amounts from such grant, a report that describes the work conducted pursuant to section 773, research findings and publications, administrative savings experienced, and an evaluation of the program.
"SEC. 775. ALLOCATION REQUIREMENT.

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

"SEC. 776. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"(a) In General.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 771(a), $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

"(b) Availability.—Amounts appropriated under subsection (a) are authorized to remain available until expended.

"Subpart 2—Summit on Sustainability

"SEC. 781. SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY.

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

"(1) encourage faculty, staff, and students at institutions of higher education to establish administrative and academic sustainability programs on campus;

"(2) enhance research by faculty and students at institutions of higher education in sustainability
practices and innovations that assist and improve sustainability;

“(3) encourage institutions of higher education to work with community partners from the business, government, and nonprofit sectors to design and implement sustainability programs for application in the community and workplace;

“(4) identify opportunities for partnerships involving institutions of higher education and the Federal Government to expand sustainable operations and academic programs focused on environmental and economic sustainability; and

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