

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2444

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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 11, 2007

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. DODD) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

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

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

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

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

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

1 (5) The Nation’s institutions of higher edu-
2 cation also are uniquely positioned to prepare the fu-
3 ture labor force for addressing threats to, and seek-
4 ing opportunities for economic, environmental, and
5 social sustainability.

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

12 (7) The Nation’s institutions of higher edu-
13 cation are uniquely situated to be models of sustain-
14 able management and operations that can provide
15 examples to industry and government of operational
16 strategies that integrate the basic principles of envi-
17 ronmental, economic, and social sustainability.

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

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

1 (10) Additionally, many campuses now offer
2 courses on sustainability, but no comprehensive sys-
3 tem exists to evaluate and compare colleges and uni-
4 versities in terms of overall sustainability related
5 academic programs and practices.

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

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

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

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

21 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.**

22 Title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
23 U.S.C. 1133 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
24 the following:

1 funds for the implementation of work associated
2 with sustainability programs under this part.

3 “(d) ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—

5 “(A) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—In this sub-
6 section, the term ‘eligible institution’ means—

7 “(i) an institution of higher education;

8 “(ii) a nonprofit institution; or

9 “(iii) a consortium of institutions de-
10 scribed in clause (i) or (ii), or both.

11 “(B) CONTRACT TO ADMINISTER.—The
12 Secretary shall enter into a multi-year contract
13 with an eligible institution to administer the
14 grant program established under this section.

15 “(2) APPLICATION.—An eligible institution de-
16 siring to enter into a contract with the Secretary
17 under paragraph (1) shall submit to the Secretary
18 an application at such time, in such form, and con-
19 taining such information as the Secretary may re-
20 quire.

21 “(3) AWARDING OF CONTRACT.—The Secretary
22 shall award the contract under this subsection on
23 the basis of—

24 “(A) the capability to administer an effec-
25 tive and fair grant-making process that solicits

1 and identifies the best possible projects for
2 funding for the uses described in section 783;

3 “(B) the expertise of the applicant in high-
4 er education sustainability;

5 “(C) the relative economic effectiveness of
6 the program in terms of the ratio of overhead
7 costs to direct services; and

8 “(D) such other factors as the Secretary
9 determines appropriate.

10 “(4) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall estab-
11 lish procedures for a careful and detailed review and
12 evaluation of the administration of the higher edu-
13 cation sustainability program to determine the effec-
14 tiveness of the contractor as an administrator of the
15 grant program established under this section. The
16 Secretary shall make the results of such a review
17 and evaluation publicly available.

18 **“SEC. 782. APPLICATIONS.**

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under section
20 781(a), an eligible entity shall submit an application to
21 the Secretary at such time, in such form, and containing
22 such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

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

1 “(1) has developed or shall develop a plan, in-
2 cluding an evaluation component, for the program
3 component established pursuant to section 783;

4 “(2) shall use Federal funds received from a
5 grant under section 781(a) to supplement, not sup-
6 plant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be
7 available for projects funded under such section;

8 “(3) shall provide, with respect to any fiscal
9 year in which such entity receives funds from a
10 grant under section 781(a), non-Federal funds or an
11 in-kind contribution in an amount equal to 20 per-
12 cent of funds from such grant, for the purpose of
13 carrying out the program component established in
14 section 783; and

15 “(4) shall collaborate with business, govern-
16 ment, local workforce investment boards, and the
17 nonprofit sectors in the development and implemen-
18 tation of its sustainability plan.

19 **“SEC. 783. USE OF FUNDS.**

20 “(a) INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS.—Grants made
21 under section 781 may be used by an eligible entity that
22 is an institution of higher education, as described in sec-
23 tion 781(c)(1), for the following purposes:

24 “(1) To develop and implement administrative
25 and operations practices at institutions of higher

1 education that test, model, and analyze principles of
2 sustainability.

3 “(2) To establish multidisciplinary education,
4 research, and outreach programs at institutions of
5 higher education that address the environmental, so-
6 cial, and economic dimensions of sustainability.

7 “(3) To support research and teaching initia-
8 tives that focus on multidisciplinary and integrated
9 environmental, economic, and social elements.

10 “(4) To establish initiatives in the areas of en-
11 ergy management, green building, waste manage-
12 ment, purchasing, toxics management, transpor-
13 tation, and other aspects of sustainability.

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

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

20 “(7) To integrate sustainability curriculum in
21 all programs of instruction, particularly in business,
22 architecture, technology, manufacturing, engineer-
23 ing, and science programs.

24 “(b) PARTNERSHIPS.—Grants made under section
25 781 may be used by an eligible entity that is a nonprofit

1 consortia, association, alliance, or collaboration operating
2 as a partnership with 1 or more institutions of higher edu-
3 cation for the following purposes:

4 “(1) To conduct faculty, staff, or administrator
5 training on the subjects of sustainability and institu-
6 tional change.

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

9 “(3) To conduct efforts to engage external
10 stakeholders such as business, alumni, and accred-
11 iting agencies in the process of building support for
12 research, education, and technology development for
13 sustainability.

14 “(4) To conduct professional development pro-
15 grams for faculty in all disciplines to enable faculty
16 to incorporate sustainability content in the faculties’
17 courses.

18 “(5) To enable an appropriate nonprofit con-
19 sortia, association, alliance, or collaboration oper-
20 ating in partnership with an institution of higher
21 education to create the analytical tools necessary for
22 institutions of higher education to assess and meas-
23 ure the institution’s progress toward fully sustain-
24 able campus operations and fully integrating sus-
25 tainability into the curriculum.

1 “(6) To develop educational benchmarks for in-
2 stitutions of higher education to determine the nec-
3 essary rigor and effectiveness of academic sustain-
4 ability programs.

5 **“SEC. 784. REPORTS.**

6 “An eligible entity that receives a grant under section
7 781(a) shall submit to the Secretary, for each fiscal year
8 in which the entity receives amounts from such grant, a
9 report that describes the work conducted pursuant to sec-
10 tion 783, research findings and publications, administra-
11 tive savings experienced, and an evaluation of the pro-
12 gram.

13 **“SEC. 785. ALLOCATION REQUIREMENT.**

14 “The Secretary may not make grants under section
15 781(a) to any eligible entity in a total amount that is less
16 than \$250,000 or more than \$2,000,000.

17 **“SEC. 786. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
19 priated to carry out section 781(a), \$50,000,000 for fiscal
20 year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each
21 of the 5 succeeding fiscal years.

22 “(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated under
23 subsection (a) are authorized to remain available until ex-
24 pended.

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

2 **“SEC. 791. SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY.**

3 “Not later than September 30, 2008, the Secretary
4 shall convene a summit of higher education experts work-
5 ing in the area of sustainable operations and programs,
6 representatives from agencies of the Federal Government,
7 and business and industry leaders, to focus on efforts of
8 national distinction that—

9 “(1) encourage faculty, staff, and students at
10 institutions of higher education to establish adminis-
11 trative and academic sustainability programs on
12 campus;

13 “(2) enhance research by faculty and students
14 at institutions of higher education in sustainability
15 practices and innovations that assist and improve
16 sustainability;

17 “(3) encourage institutions of higher education
18 to work with community partners from the business,
19 government, and nonprofit sectors to design and im-
20 plement sustainability programs for application in
21 the community and workplace;

22 “(4) identify opportunities for partnerships in-
23 volving institutions of higher education and the Fed-
24 eral Government to expand sustainable operations
25 and academic programs focused on environmental
26 and economic sustainability; and

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

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