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For More Information Contact:
John Surrick—CBF
443-482-2045

NCLI COALITION CELEBRATES HISTORIC LEGISLATION INTRODUCED ON EARTH DAY

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -- Citing the critical need to improve environmental education across the country, The No Child Left Inside Coalition today applauded Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD) for introducing the Senate and House versions of the historic No Child Left Inside Act (NCLI) on Earth Day 2009. The bi-partisan legislation, if passed, would mark the first environmental education legislation to pass Congress in more than 25 years.

“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.

Research shows that when environmental education is integrated into the curriculum, student achievement increases in core academic areas including science, math, and reading. Additional research finds that schools that teach the core subjects using the environment as an integrating context also demonstrate reduced discipline and classroom management problems; increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and greater student pride and ownership in accomplishments.

The bill authorizes new funding for states to provide high-quality, environmental instruction. Funds would support outdoor learning activities both at school and in non-formal environmental education centers, teacher professional development, and the creation of state environmental literacy plans.

“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.

The No Child Left Inside Coalition includes 1,300 organizational members—representing more than 50 million individuals.

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“That this legislation is introduced on Earth Day, with critical environmental issues looming on the horizon, should be a reminder to us 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 Reed and Congressman Sarbanes for their leadership in championing an issue that is so fundamental to our long-term success in educating the next generation of environmental stewards.”

Co-sponsors in the Senate include BenCardin (D-Md.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Christopher Dodd (D-Connecticut), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-New York), John Kerry(D-Massachusetts), Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey), Blanche Lincoln (D- Arkansas), Patty Murray (D-Washington), Bernie Sanders (D-Vermont), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island).

Co-Sponsors in the House include Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA), Timothy Bishop (D-NY), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU), Lois Capps (D-CA), Kathy Castor (D-FL), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), Gerald Connolly (D-VA), Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Keith Ellison (D-MN), Bob Filner (D-CA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Phil Hare (D-IL), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Rush Holt (D-NJ), Michael Honda (D-CA), Ron Kind (D-WI), Barbara Lee (D-CA), John Lewis (D-GA), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), Doris Matsui (D-CA), Michael Michaud (D-ME), James Moran (D-VA), John Olver (D-MA), Jared Polis (D-CO), Robert Scott (D-VA), Jose Serrano (D-NY), Joe Sestak (D-PA), Albio Sires (D-NJ), Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH), Pete Fortney Stark (D-CA), John Tierney (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), David Wu (D-OR), and John Yarmuth (D-KY).

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