



## NATURAL SCIENCE COLLECTIONS ALLIANCE

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February 19, 2009

Majority Leader Harry Reid  
The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable Max Baucus  
The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
The Honorable Dave Obey  
The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
The Honorable Charles Rangel  
The Honorable Henry Waxman  
The Honorable Dave Camp  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, and Conferees:

On behalf of the 102 member institutions of the Natural Science Collections Alliance, thank you for removing language that would have prohibited museums from receiving funding from the *American Recovery and Reinvestments Act of 2009*. As you are aware, this language would have prohibited natural history museums and scientific collections from competing for grants from agencies such as the National Science Foundation.

Museums are important to local and state economies across the nation. For example, museums employ over 250,000 individuals, are consumers of \$14.5 billion of goods and services, and are the Nation's third most popular tourist destination. Moreover, natural history museums and science collections are centrally important components of our nation's scientific research infrastructure. These institutions, their holdings, and the scientists that utilize these facilities are centrally involved in providing answers to some of our most challenging problems, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and threats to public health and food security from emerging diseases and invasive species.

In addition to their economic benefits, museums are important education institutions. The collections of fossils, preserved biological specimens, and minerals housed in museums are used in training college and graduate students in science. These collections are also vital to scientific research conducted on pressing issues such as climate change, the loss of biological diversity, and the spread of invasive species and disease.

The Natural Science Collections Alliance is a nonprofit association that supports natural science collections, their human resources, the institutions that house them, and their research activities for the benefit of science and society.

Again, thank you for recognizing the importance of natural science collections and natural history museums to our nation's economic and scientific enterprises. Please do not hesitate to contact me or NSC Alliance director of public policy, Dr. Robert Gropp, at 202-628-1500 x 250 if you ever require additional information about scientific collections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M. Mares'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael A. Mares, Ph.D.  
President