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Contact: Dr. Robert Gropp
(202) 628-1500 x 250

Natural Science Collections, Museums Join Call for a Presidential Debate on Science

WASHINGTON, DC (February 25, 2008) – The Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSC Alliance) announced today that it has joined the call for a presidential debate on science by officially endorsing Science Debate 2008.

“Science is essential to our common future and well-being, yet surveys show that science literacy in the United States is in steep decline, threatening the nation’s future economic, scientific, and technological development. It is thus important that the presidential candidates clearly share with the American public their vision for the nation’s scientific research and development policy,” said NSC Alliance president Dr. Michael A. Mares. “We often hear rhetoric about the importance of science to our continued economic growth and the critical need for science to solve environmental and health problems, yet our nation’s scientific research infrastructure—such as natural science collections and museums—continue to face difficult times as a result of chronic under-funding. Such organizations are critical to the continued ability of scientists to study the past and present, and extend their findings into the future. Yet these enormous repositories of primary data on biodiversity, extinction, climate change, emerging diseases, environmental contamination, and other important subjects are poorly maintained, understaffed, and their data often inaccessible to researchers. A presidential debate will allow the scientific community and the broader population to evaluate how the candidates would address these and other important issues.”

As stated on the Science Debate 2008 web site (www.sciencedebate2008.com), the effort is a response to the many “urgent scientific and technological challenges facing America and the rest of the world, the increasing need for accurate scientific information in political decision making, and the vital role scientific innovation plays in spurring economic growth and competitiveness...”

NSC Alliance joins a broad cross-section of scientific organizations, business and educational leaders, and scientists calling for the debate. Among the other scientific organizations to have endorsed Science Debate 2008 are the American Institute of Biological Sciences, American Chemical Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, American Institute of Physics, and the National Academies (Science, Engineering, and Institute of Medicine), among dozens of others.

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About NSC Alliance

The Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSC Alliance, www.nscalliance.org) is a Washington, DC-based 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. NSC Alliance members are part of an international community of museums, botanical gardens, herbariums, universities and other institutions that house natural science collections and utilize them in research, exhibitions, academic and informal science education, and outreach activities.

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