



Your Nature Connection

August 10, 2009

Dr. John Holdren, Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street Room 5228
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Dr. Holdren:

On behalf of the San Diego Natural History Museum, I write to express strong support for the Natural Science Collections Alliance (NSC Alliance) proposed Executive Order for issuance by President Obama to promote the preservation and use of scientific collections.

Natural science collections are irreplaceable resources that enable us to understand the world in which we live. These specimen and data collections not only help us understand the biological and physical history of earth, they also are essential to our ability to understand how earth systems function today and how they may function in an ever changing world.

The San Diego Natural History Museum's mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California; and to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment. Our collections of over 9.2 million research specimens are helping researchers understand the impacts of climate change in southern California, assisting land managers in the development of multiple species conservation plans, and provide opportunities for education experiences for the next generation of scientists and policy makers.

The proposed Executive Order sends a strong message to the natural science collections research and education community. In short, it would demonstrate that the Obama Administration is aware of the important role our institutions play in the nation's scientific research and education enterprise. Moreover, it would demonstrate that federal support and use of data from scientific collections has been hindered by inadequate coordination of planning and budgets. The Executive Order would establish a formal mechanism by which federal agencies could ensure wise and strategic investments in this important and irreplaceable part of our research infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you are ever in San Diego, I would welcome an opportunity to provide you with a tour of the San Diego Natural History Museum. It would be my honor to take you on a behind the scenes tour of our collections. Please do not hesitate to contact William Brown, NSC Alliance President, or Robert Gropp, NSC Alliance Director of Public Policy if you have any questions concerning the proposed Executive Order.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Wall, Ph.D.
Director of the Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias
Vice President of Research