

Florida Museum of Natural History  
Office of the Director

August 5, 2009

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

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Dear Dr. Holdren:

The Florida Museum of Natural History expresses its 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.

Our nation's natural science collections are necessary for us to understand the biological and physical history of earth and are essential to our ability to understand how earth systems function in an ever-changing world. The vast amount of information in collections exists in no other form or place. Much of the information was obtained prior to modern development and constitutes an irreplaceable record of our natural heritage.

The Florida Museum of Natural History, at the University of Florida, contains world-class natural history collections and databases that are essential to understanding past and present natural and human environments. These collections are premier examples of the world's archive of biodiversity information that enables us to understand and interpret biological diversity and cultural heritage, as well as predict impacts of climate change and develop policies for sustainable use of natural resources.

The proposed Executive Order sends a strong message to the natural science collections research and education community. It will 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 attention to this matter. If you are ever in Gainesville, I would welcome an opportunity to provide you with a tour of the Florida Museum. Please do not hesitate to contact William Brown, NSC Alliance President, or Robert Gropp, NSC Alliance Director of Public Policy, if you have questions concerning the proposed Executive Order.

Sincerely

Douglas S. Jones, Director

*The Foundation for The Gator Nation*

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