

Member/Alternate

**Tourism**

Kathleen Fitzgerald / Andrea Moe

**Business**

Capt. Richard McKenna / <vacant>

**Non-Consumptive Recreation**

Debra Herring / Perry Ferguson

**Commercial Fishing**

Bruce Steele / <vacant>

**Recreational Fishing**

Capt. David Bacon / Merit McCrea

**Education**

Maria Petueli / <vacant>

**Research**

Dr. Robert Warner / Dr. Mark Steele

**Conservation**

Linda Krop / Greg Helms

**Public At-Large 1**

Phyllis Grifman / Amy Spandrio

**Public At-Large 2**

Eric Kett / Dan Powell

**Chumash Community**

Jacy Ontiveros / <vacant>

**National Marine Fisheries Service**

Peter Fischel / Elizabeth Petras

**National Park Service**

Russell Galipeau / <vacant>

**U.S. Coast Guard**

CDR Jason Collins / LTJG Brittany Steward

**Minerals Management Service**

Dr. Fred Piltz / Donna Schroeder

**U.S. Department of Defense**

Steven Schwartz / Walter Schobel

**California Department of Fish and Game**

Marija Vojkovich / Kristine Barsky

**California Resources Agency**

Brian Baird / Amy Vieira

**California Coastal Commission**

Steve Hudson / Barbara Carey

**County of Santa Barbara**

Dianne Black / Susan Curtis

**County of Ventura**

Lyn Krieger / Marilyn Miller

**Channel Islands Nat'l Marine Sanctuary**

Chris Mobley

**Monterey Bay Nat'l Marine Sanctuary**

Paul Michel / Karen Grimmer

**Gulf of the Farallones Nat'l Marine Sanctuary**

Maria Brown / Brian Johnson

**Chair**

Eric Kett

**Vice Chair**

Bruce Steele

**Secretary**

Phyllis Grifman

# Sanctuary Advisory Council

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

November 27, 2009

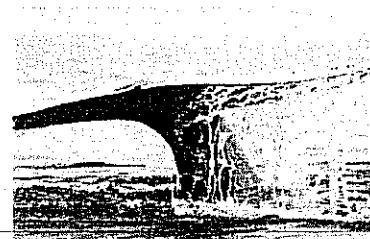
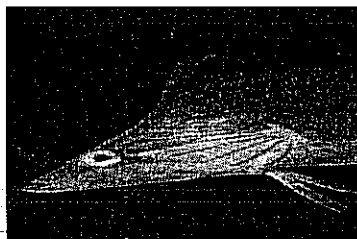
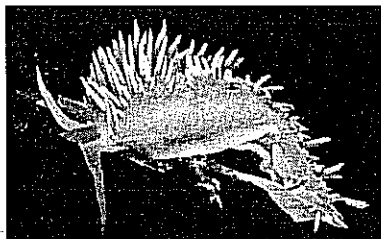
Mr. Daniel J. Basta, Director  
NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries  
1305 East-West Highway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## Re: Base Funding for MERITO Program at CINMS

Dear Mr. Basta,

As you well know, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) strongly supports the implementation of Sanctuary programs in our coastal community. It has come to our attention that, after three years of tightening budgets relative to escalating costs, fiscal year 2010 will likely present a serious financial challenge for the CINMS. The SAC is very concerned that funding must be adequate to support vital Sanctuary services such as the Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) program, vessel research and monitoring operations, Channel Islands Naturalist Corps, website services, and MPA socio-economic studies. In this letter we focus on the need to **adjust the Sanctuary's base budget specifically to cover the MERITO program.**

The SAC acknowledges that CINMS staff over the last few years has been able to reasonably sustain many programs (including MERITO) that have not been base funded by securing outside funds through partnerships, grants, donations and some enforcement case settlement funds. The SAC knows CINMS staff will continue to make efforts to secure this type of funding, and we are committed to assisting with this effort too. However, in these challenging economic times the possibility for continued success with this approach is not as strong. The SAC is concerned that without an **increase to the CINMS base budget** the MERITO program will cease to exist.



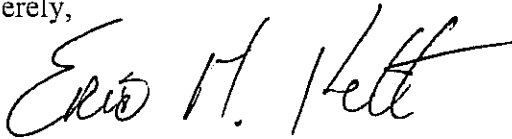
Multicultural education was an expressed need voiced by the community during the public scoping process for the CINMS Management Plan, confirmed and refined through the MERITO program's needs assessment process in 2004, and now anchored in the Sanctuary's Management Plan (Strategy AU.9 Multicultural Education). **Increasing the CINMS base budget** for the MERITO program is vital for the following reasons: (1) MERITO targets a unique underrepresented demographic that will become the next generation of scientists, researchers, and engaged citizens; (2) MERITO is an extremely successful program; and (3) funding for staff will ensure that the program continues to grow and succeed into the future. Each of these issues is discussed in more detail below.

1. MERITO Targeting a Unique Demographic and the Next Generation. Our youth need to be taught, inspired, and empowered to deal with many of the challenges they will inherit in the ocean and on land. As you know, MERITO provides programs and products to our multicultural population. Many of the students targeted in this program live only miles away from the ocean but have never had the chance to actually visit the beach or ocean. The program continues to fulfill the mission to build sanctuary stewardship, help increase understanding of ocean-related threats, and motivate culturally diverse students to pursue careers in marine sciences and/or resource protection so that the entire community can actively contribute to ocean preservation. Empowering our youth ultimately empowers the planet.
2. MERITO- A Successful Program. MERITO has been an extremely successful program and some of the highlights include: reaching nearly 9 million culturally diverse students, teachers, adults and families; training 79 minority-serving educators; producing bilingual outreach to over 50,000 people; and securing approximately \$413,000 in additional grants and in-kind support for the program. Students, teachers, families, and grant funders are relying on CINMS to keep this program stable, secure, and successful into the future.
3. Base Funding Ensures MERITO's Continued Success and Growth. MERITO has been extremely diligent and successful in forming partnerships and securing grant funding to continue and improve the program; however, it still requires consistent long term base funding to employ high quality staff. Most MERITO grants have conditions that allow funds to be used for field trips, transportation, and professional development but cannot be used to fund staff positions. For example, the NOAA B-WET grant (which to date is the largest funder for MERITO) limits the amount of funds that can be allocated for staff time. Consequently, many of the opportunities the MERITO program offers could not be carried out without separate funds to pay for staff positions. Ensuring that MERITO staff salaries are included in the Sanctuary's base budget would facilitate the program's continued success and growth into the future.

The SAC is extremely proud of the MERITO program and again would like to emphasize all the program has done by: reaching out to a unique demographic and underrepresented community, achieving the successes it has had, and successfully securing grants and outside funding. The MERITO program has earned the respect and praise of countless individuals and organizations; the enclosed letters and photos offer just a glimpse of that support. **The SAC asks that you do all you can to provide the necessary base funding for the CINMS so that it may sustain the MERITO program for future success and growth.**

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. SAC members will continue to serve the Sanctuary and do our part to help, but clearly more support is needed at this time. It would be nice to talk with you about this in person at one of our future Advisory Council meetings. Future SAC meetings are scheduled for January 29<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The SAC looks forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Eric Kett, Chair  
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

cc: William Douros, West Coast Regional Director, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

Chris Mobley, Superintendent, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Enclosures

Enclosure: Voting Results

Below are the November 20, 2009 voting results of a Sanctuary Advisory Council motion to send a letter to Dan Basta (ONMS Director) regarding funding for the CINMS MERITO program.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Council Seat</i>	<i>Vote</i>
Andrea Mills – Alternate	Tourism	Yes
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	Yes
Capt. Richard McKenna	Business	Yes
Linda Krop	Conservation	Yes
Bruce Steele [Vice Chair]	Commercial Fishing	Absent for vote
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	Yes
Maria Petueli	Education	Absent for vote
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	Yes
Phyllis Grifman [Secretary]	Public At Large #1	Yes
Eric Kett [Chair]	Public At Large #2	Absent for vote
Dan Powell – Alternate		
Jacy Ontiveros	Chumash Community	Absent for vote
Peter Fischel	NOAA Fisheries	Yes
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	Yes
CDR Jason Collins	US Coast Guard	Yes
Dr. Fred Piltz	Minerals Management Service	Yes
Steven Schwartz	Dept. of Defense	Yes
Marija Vojkovich	CA Dept. of Fish & Game	Absent for vote
Kristine Barsky- Alternate		
Brian Baird	CA Natural Resources Agency	Absent for vote
Amy Vierra - Alternate		
Steve Hudson	CA Coastal Commission	Absent for vote
Barbara Carey - Alternate		
Dianne M. Black	Santa Barbara County	Yes
Marilyn Miller - Alternate	Ventura County	Absent for vote

Yes – 13

No – 0

Abstain – 0

# CINMS Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans 'MERITO' 2004-2009 Accomplishments Summary



MERITO Academy students participate in a field trip to Anacapa Island

*In 2008, the prestigious U.S. Department of Commerce **Silver Medal Award** was given to the MERITO initiative for successfully implementing a bilingual outreach program that expands awareness to Latino communities and sparks community involvement in ocean issues.*



**CINMS MERITO Accomplishments Summary:** The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary MERITO Program has provided bilingual ocean conservation education and outreach products and services to nearly **9 million** culturally diverse students, teachers, adults and families residing in six cities along the Santa Barbara Channel region **between 2004 and 2009**. Over 40 organizations participate through in-kind contributions, grants, and fundraising. MERITO program initiatives are led by a bilingual program coordinator, with assistance from interns, Channel Islands Naturalist Corp volunteers, occasional part-time help and CINMS staff. Accomplishments include:

## **Needs Assessment, Program Design & Development (2004-2005)**

Originally developed by Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary in 2002, MERITO was adapted to the CINMS in 2005 in response to community concerns about the low representation of minority groups in sanctuary-related programs during the CINMS management plan public scoping process of 1999. In 2004, CINMS conducted a thorough needs assessment study for marine and environmental education among culturally diverse, largely under-represented and underprivileged communities of both Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Development of the CINMS MERITO program was based on the outcomes of the needs assessment, and in 2006 the program was implemented. The MERITO program is the 9th strategy outlined in the Awareness and Understanding component of the CINMS Management Plan. One of the MERITO programs -- the MERITO Academy -- is the only sanctuary education program currently evaluated externally on an annual basis. The MERITO Academy is funded primarily through grants and donations.

**MERITO Program Action Plan 2006-2010.** The CINMS MERITO action plan is composed of seven education and outreach components targeting various age levels and socio-economic groups in partnership and collaboration with a host of governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies. The components include: 1) Professional Development in the area of Environmental Education for Minority Serving Educators; 2) Student Programming (The MERITO Academy Student program); 3) Internship and Mentorship Opportunities for bilingual college students; 4) Bilingual Outreach; 5) Communications and Media Campaign; 6) Production of Education and Outreach Products, and 7) Hispanic Adult Education.

## **Professional Development (MERITO Academy Educators Workshops).**

The MERITO Academy, a partnership of CINMS MERITO and Channel Islands Marine Resource Institute, has trained **79 minority-serving educators** since fall of 2006 through the bi-annual MERITO Academy Educators Workshop (MAEW). The MAEW consists of a three-day intensive training on the use of the MERITO Academy curriculum, which is fully aligned with California Education Standards.





MERITO Academy Students learn marine science techniques through LiMPETS rocky intertidal monitoring.



MERITO Academy Students help with restoration projects on Anacapa Island.

See and hear a teacher and student provide moving Congressional testimony (October 2009) on their first-hand experiences with the MERITO Program:

[http://resources.com/mittee.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_jcalpro&Itemid=27&extmode=view&extid=297](http://resources.com/mittee.house.gov/index.php?option=com_jcalpro&Itemid=27&extmode=view&extid=297) (advance to the 28-minute, 22-second mark of the video file)

**Student Programming (The MERITO Academy).** Since 2006, the MERITO Academy has served **2,630 underserved students** enrolled in Title 1 or Head Start schools (free lunch) by providing in-class presentations and Meaningful Field Experiences at coastal sites and the Channel Islands. On average, 82% of students are Hispanic, 15% Caucasian, and 3% other ethnicities. One third are English Language Learners. Field experiences focus on watershed connections to oceans, monitoring sandy beaches, exploring rocky inter-tidal zones, and studying the Channel Islands sanctuary and Channel Islands National Park. Field trip transportation is provided to the majority of the school groups.

### **Paid Internship Opportunities for Minority College Students:**

The CINMS MERITO program has also mentored **four college minority students** in the last 5 years. These female bilingual college students received stipends during the course of their exposure to the program. In addition, **two college graduates** were hired as seasonal program assistants. One Hispanic graduate is now a Park Ranger for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

**Bilingual Outreach:** The CINMS MERITO program has reached **over 49,000** culturally diverse constituents through: verbal and printed information (e.g., 'Protegiendo Mi Santuario Marino Nacional Channel Islands' brochure) at community events; presentations at Minority Youth Careers Days; Science Fairs; Latino Conferences; and with the popular MERITO Puppet Show. Additionally, MERITO has reached **6 million people** indirectly through the bilingual bus signs and environmental posters created by Latino youth during the 2006 MERITO Environmental Cartoon Contest.

**Communications and Media Campaign:** CINMS MERITO has reached close to **3 million people** through media outlets, including 4 newspaper articles in the Ventura County Star, Santa Barbara Independent, Santa Barbara Press and Los Angeles Times, as well as coverage on local radio stations. In 2008, MERITO was featured on 'Despierta America', the most popular Spanish Language morning show on Univision, the largest broadcasting network in the United States. The show aired across the USA, Mexico and the rest of Latin America reaching 2.8 million Spanish-speaking people.

**Production of Education and Outreach Products:** The MERITO Academy curriculum is designed for 4th-8th grade levels, and contains 51 lesson plans. These are aligned to California Education standards and NOAA Ocean and Climate Literacy Principles, and applied to the Santa Barbara Channel environments. Modules focus on ocean-related threats such as climate change, ocean acidification, unsustainable fishing, urban runoff and marine debris. In 2009, a bilingual education feature video about 'Wetlands of Southern California', and 6 short videos, were created to help MERITO teachers instruct their students on the hands-on science-based field activities included in the MERITO Academy curriculum.



MERITO Academy students at work planting native plants.



MERITO Academy students present their posters, with U.S. Representative Lois Capps and MERITO Coordinator Rocio Lozano-Knowlton

### **For more information:**

Rocio Lozano-Knowlton, MERITO Program Coordinator  
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
3600 S. Harbor Blvd., Oxnard CA 93035  
Email: [Rocio.Lozano@noaa.gov](mailto:Rocio.Lozano@noaa.gov)  
<http://channelislands.noaa.gov/edu/merito.html>



**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans 'MERITO'  
Audience Reached per Project and Financial Summary (2006-2009)**

- Total people reached by CINMS MERITO (2006-2009).....→ 8,854,000
- Directly .....→ 49,244
- Indirectly (bus signs, TV, newspaper and radio).....→ 8,804,756

**Professional Development**

MERITO Academy Educators workshops (85% public school and charter schools, 15% after school programs;	79 educators
1st California Minority Training Institute with National Hispanic Environmental Council	30 Minority college students
Paid internships to Bilingual College Students	5 female
Mentorship to Middle & High school students in marine science, conservation and public speaking (Argonauts, Generations Communications, Cartoon contest)	130 (5th-12th grade) students

**Earth and Ocean Science Education Student Programming (The MERITO Academy)**

4th-8th grade students (89% Minorities - 90% unprivileged)	2,630
Hispanic families (parents of students actively participating)	130
Field experiences coordinated, implemented, sponsored by CINMS MERITO program and instructed by CINMS MERITO staff (including watershed, coastal habitats and the Channel Islands)	140

**Bilingual Outreach**

3-4 Community Events/year (2005-2009)	40,200 people
Bilingual Outreach Products (bus signs, bilingual CINMS brochure) – brochure readers # unknown	6,000,000 bus passengers

**Public Presentations (M. Sc. Rocio Lozano-Knowlton)**

**Event attendance**

Minority Youth Career Days and Science Fairs in Oxnard, Ventura and East Los Angeles	5,000 High School Students
'Ocean Literacy for multicultural audiences' presented at 2nd annual National Latino Congreso in LA	400 people
7th California Island Symposium – MA pilot program evaluation results, Regional and National B-WETConferences, AEOE conferences in California.	500

**Media and Communications**

Indirect audience

Ventura County Star 'No laughing matter – CINMS teens env. cartoon to protect ocean is part of a campaign' '06	10,000 e-page viewers
Santa Barbara Independent paper 'Youth inspired Ocean protection through CINMS cartoon contest' 2006	12,000 readers
Ventura County Star article 'With the flow, CINMS Program teachers about the ocean' 2007	32,100 e-page viewers
KHAY 100.7 radio station in Ventura County during Earth Day festival (2009) and Radio Lazer KHEX in Oxnard in 2008	30,000 households
CINMS MERITO Website	info. unavailable
MERITO segment on Univision, 'Despierta America program', aired Nationwide and in Latin America 06/19/08	2.8 million household viewers

**Investments from Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and CINMS discretionary (non-base budget) funds**

ONMS Education Minigrant 2004-2005	\$35,000
ONMS Education Minigrant 2005-2006	\$55,000
CINMS/ONMS Discretionary Funds 2006-2007	\$25,000
CINMS/ONMS Discretionary Funds 2007-2008	\$30,000
CINMS/ONMS Discretionary Funds 2008-2009	\$40,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>

**Grants and in-kind support raised by Program and Partner organization staff**

NOAA B-WET 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010	\$215,000
Ernest Hollings in partnership with MBNMS (2007-2008)	\$25,000
Amgen Foundation Inc. (2008-2009 & 2009-2010)	\$95,000
US Fish and Wildlife (2009-2010)	\$ 4,000
Santa Barbara Channel Swimmers Association 2009-2010	\$24,000
In-kind contributions from partners and collaborating organizations	\$50,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$413,000</b>

**MERITO Partners 2006-2009:**

20 governmental and non-governmental organizations including: National Hispanic Environmental Council; Santa Barbara City Creeks Division; City of Oxnard; The Nature Conservancy; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ventura County; UCSB Marine Science Institute; NCEAS (National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis); Ventura County Resource Conservation District; Island Packers Inc.; Channel Islands Marine Resource Institute; Oxnard College; Boys and Girls Club of Oxnard and Port Hueneme; California State Parks; Ventura County Office of Education; Coal Oil Point Reserve; LULAC; Ormond Point Restoration Nursery.

24 Schools and after school programs: SAGE Charter school and Montalvo Elementary in Ventura; Carpinteria Middle School and Canalino Elementary in Carpinteria; Harding Elementary, Cesar Chavez Charter School, Franklin Elementary and Community Day Middle School in Santa Barbara; EARTH'S in Thousand Oaks; and Emily Ritchen Elementary, JK Frank Intermediate, Sunkist Elementary, Elm Elementary, McKinna Elementary, Ocean View, Rio Real, Rio Del Norte, Rio Vista, Terra Vista, Mar Vista, Laguna Vista, Ramona, Richard Bard and Drifill Elementary in Oxnard and Port Hueneme.



## *Catherine French*

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Dan Basta, Director  
National Marine Sanctuaries  
NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program  
1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Director Basta:

As a ten-year member of the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps, I have had the great honor to be involved in a variety of outreach opportunities including whale watches, interpretive hikes on the Channel Islands National Park, public outreach events, school group events, Channel Islands Live Dive, research on the R/V *Shearwater*, interaction with educators and more.

One program that stands out in my mind is the MERITO program. I have had the pleasure of assisting MERITO school children, their teachers and parents on school trips to the Channel Islands. And, I have worked with the dedicated educators who implement the program in their classrooms.

Through these experiences, I have seen the dawning of a new idea through the knowing smile on a child's face when he or she has had an epiphany about possibilities for their future. Call it, an "a ha" moment, either way I have seen the wide-eyed wonderment in a child's eyes and know their lives have been changed.

One trip stands out in my mind. We were heading back to shore with a group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders who had been on a field trip to Anacapa Island. One boy kept asking me questions about the sea, the critters and what he had seen on the island. He wanted to know everything he could.

He told me that even though he was born in Oxnard, he had never been to the ocean before or out on a boat. He said it was the best thing he ever did. He told me he loved studying about the animals in the sea.

When we encountered two humpback whales on our way back to shore, and this boy was so excited he couldn't ask questions fast enough. He wanted to know everything I could tell him about the whales. When the common dolphins arrived in the midst of the larger whales, he was beside himself with joy.

He told me that before the MERITO program; he thought he would not go to college and just get some job somewhere. He had no vision or direction. He said the program studies combined with the field trips, made him decide to work toward going to college. He told his parents he wanted to be a marine scientist and teach people to take care of the oceans.

I was so impressed, that I provided all the on-the-spot encouragement I could. I told him that if he kept up his studies he could go to college and be a real attribute to the scientific community. He said, he learned so much about taking care of the planet through the MERITO studies that he had asked his mother to shop with reusable bags and was making sure his parents and sister were careful with what they put in the trash and recycling cans.

We have many children in our midst here in Ventura County who would never have an opportunity to expand their horizons without this program. We need bright and energetic young people to take their place at the helm of the oceans' future, and Rocio Lozano and MERITO are one key way we can get there.

Thank you for the work you do on our behalf.

Catherine French  
CINC Volunteer

Cc: Chris Mobley  
Rocio Lozano

November 18, 2009

Dear Mr. Basta,

My name is Staci Kaye-Carr and I am a volunteer naturalist for the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and Channel Islands National Park. I have contributed an average of 500+ hours every year since joining The Channel Islands Naturalist Corps in 2004 and was honored with being selected as Channel Islands Naturalist Corps Volunteer of the Year for 2009. Many of those hours are spent working directly with children and their parents in fostering a better understanding of the ocean, the Marine Sanctuary and our relationship as humans to this beautiful blue planet.

I have seen the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary program, MERITO, in action. I believe this is an excellent program that is greatly needed here in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, where there is a culturally diverse audience including Hispanics; a group that represents over one third of our population. Many of these children and adults live within walking distance or a short drive of the ocean, but have never been there. They are so close and yet so disconnected to the sea.

The MERITO program is an important resource to help connect these Hispanic children and adults in encouraging an understanding, respect and love for the oceans and seas and everything in them. Rocio Lozano-Knowlton, the MERITO bilingual program coordinator, teaches and excites youngsters to learn more about the Marine Sanctuary, the ocean and the planet. She motivates students to discover, explore, and to take action to protect the ecological relationships between the land and sea.

They learn to look around and discover how they can make a difference, how they can actively contribute to ocean preservation and take individual action in resource and habitat protection, and why ocean protection is a responsibility everyone shares. The MERITO program helps culturally diverse students work on personal growth, and it motivates them to consider pursuing careers in marine sciences and/or resource protection.

I'm writing to you today to request that you please keep the MERTO program functioning and to please keep it funded. To quote Sylvia Earle, "In our schools we are focusing on numbers and letters but we need, from the earliest times, to get across the concept that we are connected to nature".

Thank you,  
Staci Kaye-Carr

Staci Kaye-Carr  
Volunteer Naturalist  
Channel Islands Naturalist Corps  
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
Channel Islands National Park

**RE: CINMS Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO)  
Program**

MARTIN H. FLAM declares,

These past two years I have had the good fortune to volunteer and assist highly professional ROCIO LOZANO-KNOWLTON in the MERITO program on Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands. The quality of the MERITO program is impeccable and it might be the most important component of all the Sanctuary and Park programs as it helps make the Sanctuary and Park accessible to a most important and significant segment of our community who, due to economic and language barriers, would otherwise be substantially denied access to the world-class resources found in our very own backyard. On behalf of these underserved communities, I unreservedly recommend strong support for and all favorable consideration for the MERITO program.

I feel highly qualified to express these opinions based upon my prior experience. I was born and live in California. I practiced law here from 1972 through 2004. I am bilingual in English and Spanish. From 1972 to 1981 I was employed primarily as a federally funded legal services attorney in El Monte, Los Angeles County and Marysville, Yuba County California representing many low income Spanish language dominant Mexican-American immigrants. Thereafter I continued to represent many Spanish language dominant people from my private practice in Yuba City, Sutter County until 1986 and in Saticoy, Ventura County from 1986 to 2004. Since September, 2000 I have worked part-time as an elementary and secondary substitute school teacher in Ventura County including elementary bilingual immersion and secondary SADAI classes. In 2008 I was trained and certified by the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and Channel Islands National Park as a volunteer naturalist for the Channel Islands Naturalist Corps (CINC) to provide informal interpretation on whale watching vessels, formally lead interpretive hikes on islands of the Channel Islands National Park and to staff outreach events. I have accompanied MERITO students on trips to and from the islands and on their island hikes.

Sincerely,

MARTIN H. FLAM

1856 Powell Drive

Ventura, California 93004

November 16, 2009

**The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510**

Dear Senator Boxer:

I am a fifth grade teacher at Montalvo Elementary School in Ventura, California. I write this letter to request your assistance in increasing the funding at Channel Islands and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries by **\$1 million dollars** to be specifically used for the stabilization of the MERITO (Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans) program. MERITO is the multicultural education and outreach strategy of each sanctuary.

A value of the program is the cultural diversity of the staff, marine scientists who implement the program. Minority students can more easily relate and consider marine sciences or environmental sciences as a potential careers when they interact with multicultural or minority professionals. My students would not otherwise get access to this quality of science instruction.

As a teacher in the program, I have experienced how children's repertoire of "what I want to be when I grow up change from the usual responses of "fireman", "policeman", "doctor" and "lawyer". Now, their responses include oceanographer, hydrologist, herpetologist, ROV (remotely operated vehicle) engineer, etc. Most of the students in my class come from poverty and the MERITO staff and curriculum has opened their minds to new possibilities.

It has opened my mind, as well. Because of the academy, I have developed a community action plan for reducing marine debris – starting with my school. Children have studied the impacts of litter on the watershed and beg to clean up the campus during recesses.

This information gets passed onto their families as well as they prepare posters, PowerPoint presentations, p research reports, and poetry about the harmful effects of pollution and the importance of water quality. I use the MERITO program as a core part of my curriculum and use it to reinforce literacy, math and science concepts. It inspires my students to learn.

A significant portion of my students, never visit the beach even though it is only minutes away. Because of their participation in the program, they are given access to the ocean wilderness, and this empowers them to understand why ocean science is critical, and how they can have an impact on an ocean that is facing incredible threats.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa Ellingson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Teresa Ellingson,  
Fifth Grade Teacher  
1 91 Harborview Ct.  
Ventura, CA 93003

November 19, 2009

Maria Ornelas  
1000 S. Ventu Park Rd.  
Newbury Park CA 91320  
maria@rasnowpeak.com

Dear Mr. Basta,

I'm writing to urge you to keep the MERITO program funded. This important program impacts the community in ways that may not be immediately apparent. I am a science teacher, mother of two very active children, and a CINC Volunteer since 2006. As a member of CINC, I've had the privilege to participate and contribute to various MERITO educational and community outreach functions. I have enjoyed tremendously going to Malibu Beach and doing hands-on science with students for LIMPETS. I've walked with excited children along a 100 ft. blue whale (a stretched-out rope in front of our booth). I remember joking in Spanish with a 4<sup>th</sup> grader, together figuring out that her mom was 7 years old when the first Earth Day was celebrated in this country, and laughing with the family when a younger child wanted to know how old "He" was at that time. I recall our success, during the Children Water Exploratorium in Oxnard, at explaining to the children in Spanish, using the MERITO model, the importance of healthy communities and their watersheds.

My most memorable experience took place during Science Day at the Santa Barbara Zoo. It was an all day affair. People came and went. A family revisited our booth, so Natalie and I engaged them again. The grandfather had sat on one of our chairs, but to the side. We were very busy and after an hour or so, it started slowing down. That's when I noticed the older man was still there. He got up and called me over. We talked for a while about whales, and as he left, he said something I will never forget. "You know what I have liked most?" Smiling at him, I thought he would regurgitate something he heard me say to the children, but instead, he said, "I liked the fact that I was able to understand what you were saying, and it is all very interesting" We had been talking in Spanish. A light went on in my head, "Comprehensible input"

These few of many anecdotes and incidents illustrate why I renew my commitment to CINC every year. It may be difficult to measure the positive impact of MERITO, but I'm confident this personal education contributes to the shaping of our children, our future leaders and guardians of our post precious, local resource, the CINP & CINMS. Thank you,

Maria Ornelas

1. Earth Day in Oxnard ----- April 4, 2009
2. LIMPETS -- at Malibu Beach for Montalvo Elementary School --- May 13, 2009
3. Children Water Science Exploratorium in Oxnard --- May 21, 2009
4. 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Science Day at SB Zoo ----- October 3, 2009

Lorna

Nov 11, 2009

Dear Merito staff,  
I really enjoyed our field trip yesterday to coal oil point preserve. I learned more about sea hair, and sea stars. When the boy picked the sea star up, it was cool because it was eating a mussel. I had lots of fun when I touched the sea snail. I had fun when I held two hermit crabs on my hand. They started fighting for the shell. Oh and

Thank you  
for letting us  
go to the  
trip.



# Poster Day



## Anacapa Island Field Trip & Live Dive



## Field & Lab Work at UCSB





Channel Islands



# MERITO Academy

Recognizes / Reconoce a

*For their commitment to protecting our Earth, its watersheds and its ocean and the Channel Islands through their actions and choices every day.*

*Por su compromiso en proteger nuestra Tierra, sus cuencas, sus océanos e islas Channel Islands a través de sus acciones y decisiones de cada día.*

