



The No Child Left Inside Act of 2009

The No Child Left Inside Coalition, a large and growing coalition representing more than 1150 organizations with more than 47 million members, is supporting federal legislation to expand and improve environmental education in our public schools – the No Child Left Inside Act of 2009.

This marker bill will include new funding and support for environmental education in the reauthorized No Child Left Behind law, due for renewal in 2009. In particular, the legislation will provide:

- Funding to states to train teachers in environmental education and to operate model environmental education programs, which include outdoor learning.
- Funding to states that create environmental literacy plans to ensure that high school graduates are environmentally literate.
- Funding through an environmental education grant program to build state and national capacity.

The No Child Left Inside bill is critically needed.

Many schools have had to cut back on the time they can devote to environmental education, in part due to the unintended consequences of No Child Left Behind. With its emphasis on high-stakes testing in math and reading, the law has crowded out time and resources available for other subjects, including environmental education. However, learning through environmental education is not incompatible with math and reading instruction. In fact, some studies have shown that students who learn science, math, reading and social studies using environment-based curricula are more engaged in and excited about their learning.

The No Child Left Inside bill will add funding and incentives for states to improve environmental education, but it will not add any new mandates or testing requirements. Under the No Child Left Inside Act, teachers will have increased flexibility to use environmental education methods to teach their students the basic subjects while exciting them about the real-world environment. Teachers who are not already comfortable with environmental education methods will receive training in environmental education techniques such as teaching across disciplines and using the outdoors as a classroom.

Under the bill, states will be given an incentive to develop environmental literacy plans. This provision will allow states to draw on the expertise of both the schools and

local environmental educators – at parks or nonprofit learning centers, for example – to develop plans to ensure that high school graduates have a basic understanding of their natural world and the challenges it faces.

The legislation is winning strong bipartisan support in Congress. Encourage your legislators to co-sponsor the bill.

To learn more about the No Child Left Inside Act, visit www.ncicoalition.org.