



9 April 2009

The Honorable Beverly Perdue
Governor's Mansion
310 Blount St.
Raleigh, NC 23601
governor.office@nc.gov

Via e-mail and Fax: (919)733-2120

Dear Governor Perdue:

As the CEO of the Special Libraries Association (SLA), an international library and information organization with more than 11,000 members worldwide, I am writing to express SLA's strong concern over the proposed budget elimination of the North Carolina Office of Environmental Education (OEE).

The current recession is affecting everyone, and tough decisions must be made. But these decisions must be made prudently, with an eye on the future. SLA opposes the elimination, downsizing or diminution of information services at the North Carolina Office of Environmental Education until a detailed plan is produced and vetted by qualified information and policy experts who understand the critical nature of maintaining valuable services and access to information for current and future users—government, business, researchers, and individuals.

Has such a plan been created? If so, has this plan been made available for review and comment by experts and those affected? What systems have been developed to receive comments and identify alternative solutions, unanticipated outcomes, or recommendations to maximize the success of the library while at the same time reducing expenses?

The Office of Environmental Education maintains a comprehensive and searchable online listing of North Carolina's environmental education facilities, resources, materials and organizations. It maintains and promotes a statewide calendar of environmental education events and professional development programs offered by organizations throughout the state. The OEE develops, promotes and distributes resource publications that are used widely by educators, businesses, government agencies and the public, and also promotes the state's 187 Environmental Education Centers. An extreme budget elimination like this is short-sighted and will give way to increased costs for tax payers that are not apparent right now.

The citizenry of North Carolina and beyond rely on the services and information provided by the OEE to effectively conduct their work. From what little SLA has seen, it seems that core services will be heavily affected. OEE's duties will reportedly be divided among several agencies. What plans and procedures have been made to provide or redirect users to the appropriate resources? How will these valuable resources be maintained?

Understandably, these difficult economic times require hard decisions and budget cuts, but it is imperative to fully understand the impact of these cuts beyond the immediate goal of saving money. It is critical in this current economic crisis that an information management strategy be developed. Most importantly, it must involve information professionals, who understand how information should be selected organized, analyzed, and disseminated. Only these information professionals will fully understand what must, can, and should be prioritized as you consider any budget cuts.

I ask that you and your leadership team provide a detailed plan of how the valuable services of the North Carolina Office of Environmental Education will be continued with the elimination of its budget. A more realistic budget will serve the interests of government, business, and private citizens and will save more money in the long run.

Respectfully,



Janice R. Lachance
Chief Executive Officer
Special Libraries Association
Jlachance@sla.org