

Waste Action Alert

A publication of the RSC Sunset Caucus from co-chairs Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)
Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman

Eliminate the Office of Polar Programs

March 21, 2012

Program or Item Targeted: The Office of Polar Programs of the National Science Foundation.

Cost of Program or Item: Cutting research grants to the Office of Polar Programs would save \$25 million annually, and up to \$250 million over ten years.

Background on Program or Item to Be Sunseted: The National Science Foundation annually awards up to \$25 million to academic researchers seeking to study conditions in the Arctic and Antarctic through the Office of Polar Programs, which looks to “[encourage and support basic research in the Arctic and Antarctic](#)” focused on the solid earth, glacial and sea ice, terrestrial ecosystems, the oceans, the atmosphere and beyond. Major objectives include understanding of the natural phenomena and processes in the Antarctic and Arctic regions and their role in global systems. To provide postdoctoral fellowships for the development and training of new investigators in polar regions research with goals to support innovative research in emerging areas, encourage interdisciplinary research, foster activities that create broader impacts for science and society, and to increase the participation of underrepresented groups.” The Office Polar Programs is authorized by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950.

Why This Item Is Wasteful: Many of the recent grants to this program have been unnecessary and irresponsible uses of taxpayer dollars. These grants have included: \$485,918 for website design and maintenance, \$1,370,994 on the “Polar Palooza” project, \$1,246,068 for Television documentary, “Antartica’s Icy Secrets,” \$322,313 for an Artists and Writers Exhibition for polar arctic research, and \$1,122,333 for Ice Planet Earth.

MEMBER ACTION ITEM: Rep. Joe Walsh has introduced H.R. 3396. This legislation would abolish the Office of Polar Programs, and would rescind any unobligated funds appropriated for its activities to be returned to the Treasury to reduce the federal deficit. For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Aindriu Colgan at Aindriu.Colgan@mail.house.gov.

If you would like to participate in eliminating wasteful programs with the RSC Sunset Caucus, please e-mail Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov.

Note: Not every item featured in the Waste Action Alerts is necessarily endorsed by the RSC. These Alerts highlight the individual initiatives of members of the RSC Sunset Caucus.

*“The RSC Sunset Caucus uncovers government waste and seeks to eliminate it,
working to sunset programs that taxpayers shouldn’t be paying for.”*

