

## Environment & Public Policy Committee

### Members:

Charlie Butterworth

Kelly Steele

Erin Tripp

During the past year, the Committee has acted on three requests that resulted in recommendations to the ASPT council to endorse:

### A. American Recovery And Reinvestment Act

February 2009

**Subject:** American Recovery & Reinvestment Act

**Draftees:** American Society Of Plant Taxonomists

**To:** Senators / Representatives

**Summary:** This letter urged U.S. senators and representatives to restore cuts to N.S.F. funding made in initial versions of the federal stimulus package. Unfortunately, Congress passed the bill before we were able to send the letter.

### B. Louisiana State Board Of Elementary & Secondary Education

June 2009

**Subject:** Louisiana Science Education Act

**Draftees:** American Society Of Plant Taxonomists

**To:** Nina Ford, State Board Of Elementary & Secondary Education

**Summary:** This letter expressed concerns regarding aspects of the creationist Louisiana Science Education Act. In particular, the society recommended:

- (i) the restoration of the sentence "Religious beliefs shall not be advanced under the guise of critical thinking."
- (ii) that the Louisiana Department of Education follow the model of the extant system for textbook adoption.
- (iii) that information contained in supplemental material be accepted by the community of scientists as valid, current, and rigorous science.
- (iv) that Section D.4.d of the act state "Materials that teach creationism or intelligent design or that advance the religious belief that a supernatural being created humankind shall be prohibited for use in science classes."

C. In March 2009, the Committee signed a petition to the Texas State Board Of Education urging adoption of the science education standards (Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills) as well as voicing opposition to the undermining of teaching of biological evolution. Unfortunately, the state of Texas went ahead with their proposal.