

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) announced today that the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has awarded \$425,000 to Mote Marine Laboratory's Science Consortium for Ocean Replenishment (SCORE). Score is a multi-state initiative for the recovery of the nation's ocean fisheries.

"Mote Marine is a global leader in marine sciences," said Buchanan. "This funding will support their efforts to increase our understanding of the sea and develop an economical and environmentally friendly fishery management strategy to replenish our nation's critically depleted fisheries."

Buchanan helped secure \$846,000 in federal funding for the SCORE program at Mote in the fiscal year 2008 omnibus appropriations bill. The remainder of the funding is expected to be awarded in the near future.

"This funding will help Mote and our partners at the NOAA-NMFS lab in Seattle, the University of New Hampshire and the University of Southern Mississippi continue to play a leading role in the development of responsible stock enhancement in Florida and the United States," said Dr. Ken Leber, Director of Mote's Center for Fisheries Enhancement and project leader of the SCORE consortium. "At Mote we will apply our portion of the funding to developing new stock enhancement technology for snook and red drum. We thank Congressman Buchanan for his support of this important research."

Stock enhancement involves releasing young hatchery-raised fisheries into the wild to augment the natural supply and optimize fishery harvests. There is little known about the effects of marine stock enhancement or its effectiveness. SCORE is conducting research to develop responsible, effective, and scientifically-based marine stock enhancement and restocking technologies.