

\$750,000 Challenge Grant Heats Up Exhibit at Scripps Birch Aquarium

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation provides matching grant for climate change exhibit at UC San Diego Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography

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Regan Olsson

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has awarded a challenge grant of \$750,000 to Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego to support its multifaceted climate change exhibit and educational program entitled *Feeling the Heat: The Climate Challenge*. For the next three years, Birch Aquarium will showcase this \$1.5 million exhibit to communicate the issues surrounding global climate change.

Based in Los Angeles, the Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by the late hotel entrepreneur and business leader, Conrad N. Hilton, who left his fortune to the Foundation with instructions to help the most disadvantaged and vulnerable throughout the world without regard to religion, ethnicity or geography. The first installment of the matching grant, to be paid over two years, has already been received and the aquarium is working toward raising the remaining \$375,000 to realize the total grant.

"Scripps scientists have been at the forefront of studying climate change for more than five decades and this is a research-based project that will help hundreds of thousands of people learn about these critical issues," said Steven M. Hilton, president and CEO of The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. "The Hilton Foundation is pleased to partner with UC San Diego, Scripps Oceanography and Birch Aquarium on this endeavor."

"As the public center for Scripps Oceanography, it is our responsibility to provide visitors the opportunity to learn about climate change," said Nigella Hillgarth, executive director of Birch Aquarium at Scripps. "The generous donation from The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation will enable us to continue this important effort and expand our outreach."

Scientists at Scripps Institution of Oceanography have been on the cutting edge of climate research for half a century. *Feeling the Heat: The Climate Challenge*, which opened in May 2007 and was dedicated during a visit by former Vice President Al Gore, is the first exhibit of its kind in San Diego County. It presents the science of global warming, highlights Scripps' half-century commitment to studying climate change and educates visitors on current environmental changes and those projected for the future. The exhibit was also recently awarded the Silver Prize in Museum Design from the Connecticut-based *Event Design* magazine, which recognizes the best designs worldwide across events, exhibits and environments.

For information on Birch Aquarium at Scripps or to find out how you can support the climate change exhibit, visit <http://aquarium.ucsd.edu/> or call 858-534-8490.

Media Contacts: Regan Olsson, 858-822-3353 Shannon Casey, 858-822-5617



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