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Sen. Gregg and UNH Announce Largest-ever New England Air Quality Research Project

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CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS, N.H. -- U. S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) today helped celebrate the opening of a three-station air quality monitoring network that will form the structure of the largest-ever air quality research initiative in New England.

The research will be undertaken by the Atmospheric Investigations, Regional Monitoring, Analysis, and Prediction program (AIRMAP), a cooperative institute between the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). It is designed to provide a detailed understanding of various sources of pollution.

Gregg secured funding for the first leg of a three-year, \$6 million New England Air Quality Study and an additional \$4.5 million in AIRMAP funding in Fiscal Year 2002 through his position as the ranking member on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, which funds NOAA.

The senator joined UNH Vice President for Research and Public Service Donald Sundberg, AIRMAP Director Robert Talbot and NOAA Assistant Administrator Dave Evans at today's event.

Gregg stated, "I was pleased to help with the funding for the New England Air Quality Study and to further AIRMAP's role as a leader in air quality research and atmospheric science. This research will not only provide additional accolades to UNH's standing as a leader in the field of atmospheric research, but will benefit the nation by leading to more accurate air

quality forecasts."

UNH's Talbot has been a major participant in NOAA and NASA air quality studies as far afield as Asia, the Arctic and over the north Atlantic Ocean, employing the latest technologies to unravel how various air pollutants move around the globe.

But, as he noted, "This is turning out to be the most exciting of all because we are able to integrate air quality, weather and climate issues in ways not usually possible with traditional programs. Senator Gregg understood that, while these are usually funded separately, they are all part of one environmental issue. He obtained the major commitment of funds to tackle them in an integrated way that is unprecedented in my experience. As a result of Senator Gregg's vision, we have a chance to make major advances in understanding how to protect our air quality and its relationship to climate change."

AIRMAP research attempts to better understand the dynamics of New England's atmosphere, air quality and weather. The joint NOAA/UNH effort combines NOAA's atmospheric research with UNH-led systematic monitoring of the region's atmospheric chemistry to provide a detailed understanding of the sources of various pollutants, and will lead to an ability to predict air quality changes as an addition to daily weather forecasts.

The program includes three comprehensive monitoring stations operating year round in Durham, Castle in the Clouds and on the summit of Mount Washington. This series of stations will enable researchers to separate out pollutants from background levels of atmospheric components occurring naturally in the environment. By integrating weather patterns with atmospheric chemistry studies, researchers will be able to determine sources of pollution as diverse as the Asian mainland, northeastern U.S. vehicle traffic, and industrial sources from the Midwest and Canada.

Some key areas of research include: the role of long range transport in shaping the regional and extra-regional air quality of New England, the role of naturally occurring emissions from regional forests in local and regional air quality, and analysis and

quantification of the chemical reactions that are producing ozone and fine particles. New England will now become a testbed for national NOAA air quality efforts.

For more information, visit the AIRMAP website at <http://airmap.unh.edu/> or contact Robert Talbot, UNH professor of atmospheric chemistry, at (603) 862-1546.

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