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Dear Dr. Cassidy-Hanley:

I am writing to confirm _____
(school name)

participation in the “Students Engaging the Environment: A Student and Scientist Collaboration to Assess Aquatic Invasive Species” project, supported by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture HATCH program. This project directly engages secondary school teachers and students in a collaborative research project with Cornell scientists assessing levels of invasive fish species throughout New York. The data resulting from this effort will provide important information regarding locations and levels of invasive fish species, based on a unique collaboration between Cornell University research scientists and students and teachers in NY schools.

I understand that the project will involve students in the collection of water samples from New York waterways as part of an invasive species monitoring program, accompanied by classroom study of scientific and societal issues related to invasive species. I further understand that kits containing the collection materials needed for collecting water samples, along with detailed instructions on proper sampling techniques and background information on the ecological and economic impact of the invasive fish species being monitored, will be supplied at no cost by the program. Transportation costs to and from the collections sites are not included. Water collection for this program can be carried out from shore, or from piers or docks, and does not require the use of any kind of watercraft.

Students will receive invaluable training in the essentials of “how research is done” within a real research project, an approach that lends relevancy to related ecological and environmental concepts presented. Cornell scientists will analyze the samples collected using state of the art equipment and techniques, and will share the data generated with the students, along with instructions on analysis, interpretation, and implications of the findings. Teachers will be provided with additional information regarding the interpretation and use of the data generated. The results can be used as a springboard for classroom discussion of the current status of invasive species remediation efforts, and may be used as a basis for further scientific reading and writing. The contributions of students and teachers at each participating school will be acknowledged on the program website.

I am fully supportive of participation by teachers and students in this program and look forward to an educationally and scientifically beneficial collaboration with your research team.

Sincerely,

Signature

Date: _____