

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 19, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-107, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Majority Leader McCarthy:

We write regarding S. 1057, the *Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2017*. We respectfully ask that you bring this bill to the floor for a vote without delay.

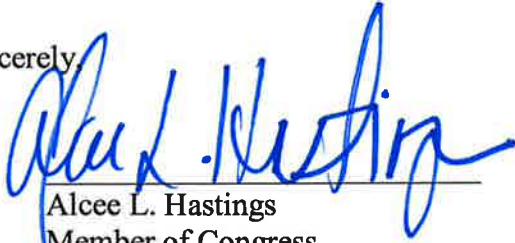
S. 1057, an important bipartisan bill, passed the Senate by Voice Vote on September 26, 2017. This bill would reauthorize the *Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998* (HABHRCA), set to expire in August, from fiscal year (FY) 2018 through FY 2023. The measure would build on previous authorizations by reauthorizing the Harmful Algal Bloom Federal Interagency Task Force and formally adding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the task force; granting the federal government the authority to declare severe algal blooms or hypoxic events as events of national significance, allowing states and localities access to disaster-like funding; and permitting private donations to be used to fund recovery for events of national significance.

For the third time in five years, harmful algal blooms in Lake Okeechobee serve as a major cause for health and economic concerns for coastal communities on the St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon, and the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary. Last month, the toxic blue-green algae began to spread across Lake Okeechobee, and now covers about 90 percent of the Lake. The foul bloom has since spread to the St. Lucie River and to the Caloosahatchee River, prompting Governor Rick Scott (R-FL) to declare a state of emergency for seven Florida counties – Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie – on Monday, July 9, 2018.

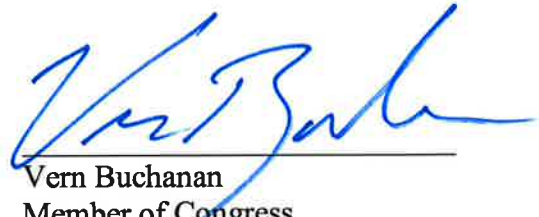
For nearly two decades, the HABHRCA program has served as the federal government's research and response framework for harmful algal blooms. S. 1057 would take critical steps toward safeguarding the health of Florida's and our nation's coastal ecosystems and economies, and would do a great deal in protecting Lake Okeechobee and coastal waterways from this toxic algae.

We urge you to bring S. 1057 to the floor, so that Congress can help protect communities against environmental, economic, and public health risks caused by harmful algal blooms. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. We look forward to following up with both of you in person to discuss, and stand ready to do all that we can to assist.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress