

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 17, 2017

President-Elect Donald Trump
Trump Tower
725 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-Elect Trump,

We respectfully request that you allocate robust funding in the Fiscal Year 2018 budget request for programs that address an increasing problem around the country: harmful algal blooms (HABs). These naturally occurring phenomena are increasing in regularity, severity, and toxicity across the country, but unfortunately our understanding of when and where and with what intensity they will occur remains inadequate. We strongly support investments in science and research to increase our capacity to accurately forecast HABs and to improve our understanding of their impacts on human health. The benefits of being able to accurately forecast HABs include protecting economic activity, the health of U.S. citizens, and the environment.


HABs occur in all 50 states and cause a myriad of negative impacts on the lives of Americans. Some recent examples of the impacts include the following: the toxins associated with the so-called algae "blob," which stretched from Southern California to Alaska during the summer of 2015, shut down hundreds of miles of shellfish and crab fisheries, costing coastal communities tens of millions of dollars; a state of emergency was declared in Martin, St. Lucie, Lee, and Palm Beach counties in Florida due to the guacamole-like thick green slime of algal blooms, which led over 50% of surveyed tourists who drive the area's economy to say that they would vacation elsewhere; and in 2014 in Toledo, Ohio, where drinking water was shut off for 3 days for over 400,000 people when microcystin from the massive algal bloom in Lake Erie was detected in the municipal water system.

While federal agencies have conducted limited research to understand HABs, our comprehension of their occurrences and impacts remains limited. A coordinated study released this year from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) revealed that from a single sampling of all lakes nationwide, 39% contained toxins that originated from HABs. A follow-up study using a nationally representative subset of lakes took daily samples over the course of a year. This effort revealed that toxins were present at some point during the year in 78% of the lakes. While these results are alarming, it is more frightening to note that these studies also highlighted the fact that the detection methods we have relied upon in fresh, brackish, and salt water were inadequate to discover the various types of toxins that algal blooms produce.

To make tangible progress toward understanding and addressing the threats HABs pose to human health and our economy, we ask that you prioritize a strong and coordinated federal response in this year's budget request with robust funding allocated for HAB-related work.

We look forward to your response and to partnering with you to mitigate the impacts of HABs on the American people.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



David P. Joyce
Member of Congress



Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Darren M. Soto
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John Katko
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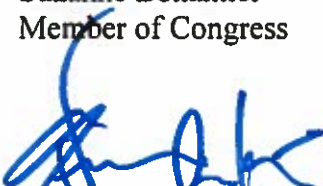
Peter A. DeFazio
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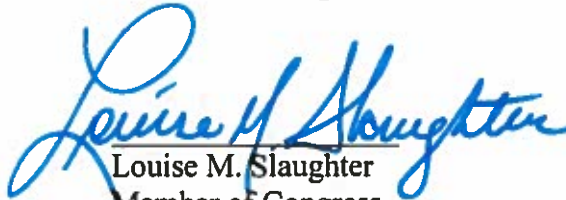
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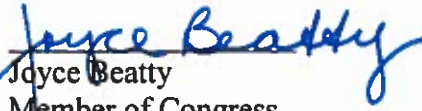
Mike Quigley
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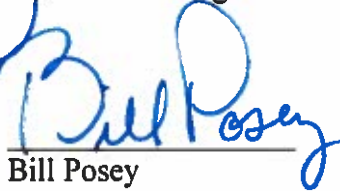
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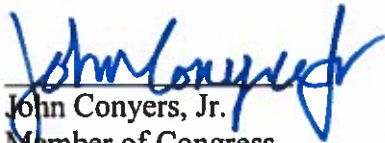
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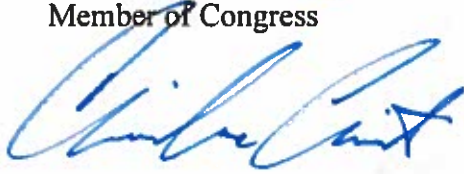
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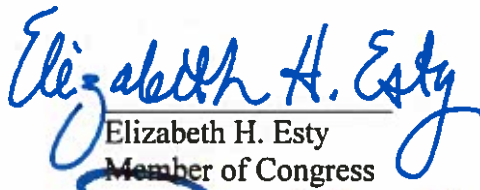
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