

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 20, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

We write to respectfully request that you allocate robust funding in the President's Fiscal Year 2019 budget request for programs that address a widespread and ever-increasing problem affecting every state and territory in the nation: toxic algae blooms, also called harmful algal blooms (HABs). Toxic algae affect marine, coastal, estuarine, and freshwater systems in all 50 states and U.S. territories, causing negative impacts on the lives of millions of Americans. A strong investment in programs that address toxic algae will help protect economic activity, the health of U.S. citizens, and our environment.

Toxic blooms harm human health and cause several billion dollars in economic losses each year. While we have made significant advances in our understanding of where, when and why blooms occur, we must improve our ability to mitigate their impacts on our communities. We strongly support investment in science, research, and management to increase our capacity to forecast, detect, and prevent HABs, as well as to lessen their impacts on human health and economies across the country.

Recent examples of these impacts include:

- In 2014 in Toledo, Ohio, more than 400,000 residents could not drink their water for three days after a massive microcystin bloom from Lake Erie was detected in the municipal water system.
- During summer 2015, potent neurotoxins associated with the so-called warm water "blob" off the West Coast triggered a toxic algae bloom from Southern California to Alaska that closed hundreds of miles of shellfish and crab fisheries. Coastal communities lost tens of millions of dollars from the closure of the Dungeness crab fishery alone.
- In 2016, Utah Lake experienced a toxic bloom. Utah Poison Control reported hundreds of calls about the bloom, including calls from at least 130 people reporting vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and rashes after coming in contact with the toxic water.
- In 2016, a massive toxic algae outbreak caused a region-wide public health emergency in New England, where toxicity levels more than 10 times the regulatory limit were found, leading to a major shellfish recall and shellfish harvesting closures across approximately half of Maine's coastline and large areas of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The toxic substance, domoic acid, can cause permanent brain damage in humans.

- In 2016, four Florida counties (Martin, St. Lucie, Lee, Palm Beach) declared states of emergencies due to the thick guacamole-like green slime of algal blooms. More than 50 percent of vacationing tourists said the blooms would lead them to vacation elsewhere. Tourism is one of Florida's leading economic drivers.

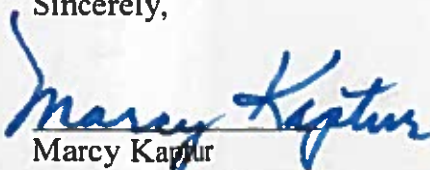
Alarming, a coordinated study released this year from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) revealed that from a single sampling of all lakes nationwide, 39% contained toxic algae. A follow-up study using 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.

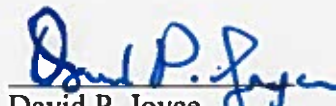
Yet, it is more frightening to note that these studies also highlighted the fact that the detection methods we have relied upon in fresh, brackish, and salt water were inadequate to detect all the toxins that various types of algae produce.

To make the necessary progress toward understanding and addressing the significant and expanding threats that toxic algae pose to human health and our national 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 working with you to reduce the impacts of HABs on the American people.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



David P. Joyce
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress


Darren M. Soto
Member of Congress


Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress

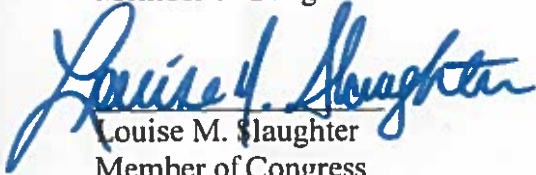

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



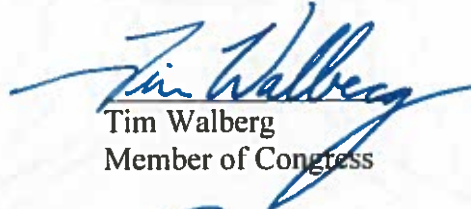
Jim Renacci
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



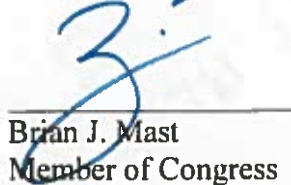
Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Brian J. Mast
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress




John Katko
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



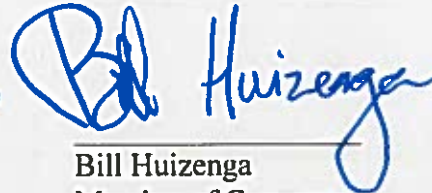
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Peter J. Visclosky
Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress

John Moolenaar
John Moolenaar
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Robert E. Latta
Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

Charlie Crist
Charlie Crist
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Fred Upton
Fred Upton
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Chris Collins
Chris Collins
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Tom Reed
Tom Reed
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin
Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

Val B. Demings
Val B. Demings
Member of Congress

Mia Love
Mia Love
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



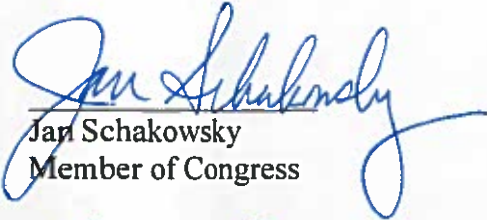
Bill Johnson
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



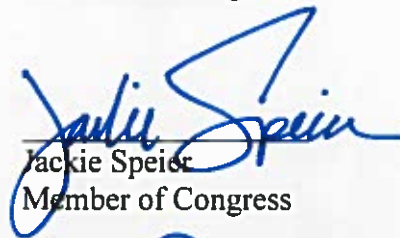
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Dave Trott
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



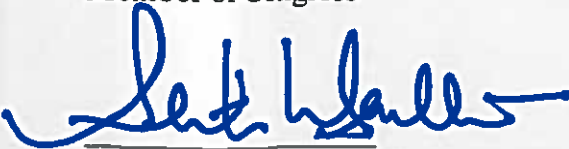
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress