

## United States Senate

March 16, 2023

The Honorable Michael Regan  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Regan:

In recent weeks, communities along Florida's Gulf Coast have been devastated by red tide algae. Red tide is a naturally-occurring phenomenon that has been a persistent issue for Florida's coasts for centuries, but this makes its toxic impacts on our waterways, marine life and beaches no less significant. During blooms of this algae, we observe mass-death events of marine life and thousands of pounds of dead sea life wash ashore, negatively impacting local communities and disrupting sensitive ecosystems. This is happening again right now and is especially harmful as these communities fight to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Ian and need tourism and other business that is disproportionately impacted when these blooms occur. It is clear that decisive action is required now.

Cooperation is necessary to address the impacts of red tide on Florida's coastal communities and ecosystems. When I served as Governor of Florida, I directed more than \$20 million to combat the effects of a major red tide boom in 2018. In response to this natural disaster, I brought together scientific research partners like Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to work with state agencies. Florida took a multipronged approach that involved government at the state and local level to address the impacts as quickly as possible. Building on this, I worked with Senator Marco Rubio last Congress to pass, and have the president sign into law, our *South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act*, which requires an inter-agency task force to develop a plan to reduce, mitigate, and control harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in South Florida.

The current crisis on our coasts must be dealt with quickly to protect the Florida environment and economy. As your agency is an integral partner in responding to and preventing toxic red tide, I write to ask for a course of action from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).


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1. Knowing that this is a naturally-occurring issue, which has impacted Florida for hundreds of years, what is the agency doing to stem the developments of red tide algae blooms and/or mitigate the impacts of these blooms on marine ecosystems to prevent or decrease fish kills?
2. What data is the EPA currently collecting on the proliferation of these harmful algal blooms? If any data has been collected, has it been shared publicly so that our state can effectively respond?
3. Are EPA officials working with the State of Florida, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife; research organizations, like Mote Marine; and other local communities and partners on the mitigation of and response to red tide?
4. How quickly will the inter-agency task force, authorized in law thanks to the *South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act*, be on the ground in Florida collecting information?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott  
United States Senator