

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1008

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include algal blooms in the definition of a major disaster, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2023

Mr. DONALDS (for himself, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. FROST, Mr. POSEY, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mrs. LUNA, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mr. MAST, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. WALTZ, and Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include algal blooms in the definition of a major disaster, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Combat Harmful Algal
5 Blooms Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The presence of harmful algal blooms
4 threaten public health, interrupt economic activity,
5 and contribute to the ongoing degradation of ecologi-
6 cal communities.

7 (2) Algal blooms are part of healthy and pro-
8 ductive freshwater and saltwater systems, but harm-
9 ful algal blooms may become intense, long-lasting,
10 expansive, and may contain enough poisonous
11 neurotoxins to harm marine life and humans alike.

12 (3) Water conditions and ecological balance in
13 marine environments depend on nutrient and salinity
14 conditions, which are often influenced by—

15 (A) tidal flow and circulation;

16 (B) freshwater input from the land;

17 (C) coastal nutrient recycling; and

18 (D) urban development.

19 (4) Harmful algal blooms, depending on the se-
20 verity, may result in the widespread mortality of ma-
21 rine life and aquatic specimens, which may result in
22 unpleasant sights and smells around the impacted
23 body of water.

24 (5) Harmful algal blooms can force the closure
25 of beaches, impose fishing and shellfish harvesting

1 restrictions, and could even result in banning the
2 sale of seafood at restaurants.

3 (6) Tourism numbers can drop dramatically
4 during harmful algal blooms, which may result in a
5 significant economic impact to certain economies
6 that heavily depend on bringing in visitors.

7 (7) Property values near water sources that ex-
8 perience harmful algal blooms may decrease substan-
9 tially.

10 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
11 gress that Congress should focus on decreasing the over-
12 arching impact of harmful algal blooms on public health,
13 the economy, and the degradation of ecological commu-
14 nities.

15 **SEC. 3. ALGAL BLOOMS.**

16 Section 102(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster
17 Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(2))
18 is amended by striking “or drought” and inserting
19 “drought, or algal blooms”.

20 **SEC. 4. IMPACTS OF ALGAL BLOOMS ON AIR QUALITY.**

21 Not later than 365 days after the date of enactment
22 of this Act, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control
23 and Prevention shall submit to the Committee on Environ-
24 ment and Public Works of the Senate, the Committee of
25 Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, the

1 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Sen-
2 ate, the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the
3 House of Representatives, the Committee on Science,
4 Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives,
5 and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the
6 House of Representatives a detailed study relating to the
7 health effects of exposure to cyanotoxins in the air that
8 result from algal blooms.

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