

December 4, 2023

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
House Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Lofgren,

On behalf of the millions of Americans who enjoy recreational fishing and boating and the tens of thousands of businesses they support, we are writing to express our strong support for the amendments included in H.R. 6093, the Weather Act Reauthorization of 2023, to reauthorize the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABHRCA).

The Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act is critically important legislation that has advanced the scientific understanding of harmful algal blooms (HABs) and the ability to detect, monitor, assess, and predict HABs and hypoxia events. As recently witnessed in South Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and the San Francisco Bay, HABs have a severe impact on fish populations, fisheries habitats and even human health. Not only are entire ecosystems impacted, but the economic losses extend to local and national businesses that depend on access to healthy aquatic systems.

In addition to marine ecosystems, HABs and hypoxia events gravely affect freshwater habitats in rivers and lakes throughout the country. Given these widespread impacts, we are grateful to see these provisions reauthorize the National Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Program and the federal interagency working group, which would enable the program to continue building upon its success in developing and implementing action plans to address harmful algal blooms. Funding through this reauthorization will further ensure that NOAA, EPA and the interagency working group have the resources to sufficiently develop and implement research, monitoring and mitigation programs under HABHRCA.

The amendments offered by Representatives Bonamici and Posey, and included in H.R. 6093, support ongoing programs under HABHRCA, expanding opportunities for coordinated forecasting and mitigation of HABs and hypoxia events. These provisions include the establishment of a national network of HAB observation systems, incorporating emerging technologies and creating a HAB data assembly center to provide a central repository for HAB forecasting. These amendments would additionally create an incubator program to partner with universities and research institutions to invest in emerging technologies and the development of novel control strategies to prevent and mitigate HABs. These bipartisan programs will support the ongoing interagency monitoring, prediction and control efforts underway under HABHRCA.

Once again, thank you for your efforts on this important issue, and we appreciate your continued leadership in support of clean water and healthy fisheries. We look forward to working with you to ensure the reauthorization of HABHRCA.

Sincerely,

American Catfishing Association
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
BoatU.S.
Bonefish and Tarpon Trust
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Guy Harvey Foundation
International Game Fish Association
Major League Fishing
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
National Wildlife Federation
The Billfish Foundation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership