

# Gaining the President's Signature on S. 1254

Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research  
and Control Act

“HABHRCA”

Presented by Alex Cuyler, Lane County  
Intergovernmental Relations Manager

# Summary

- The purpose of S. 1254 is to reauthorize and amend the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 (HABHRCA) to promote and coordinate a national research strategy for improving the understanding and prevention of marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms (HABs) and hypoxia events.

# Freshwater

- This 2008 report outlines the following priorities for freshwater HAB research and response: (1) improve methods for detecting HAB cells and toxins; (2) improve understanding of HAB toxin uptake, metabolism, and health effects in humans and animals; (3) improve human health and ecological risk assessments; (4) improve knowledge of bloom occurrence through better monitoring; (5) improve bloom prediction; (6) develop HAB prevention and control methods; and (7) improve HAB research and response infrastructure.

# This measure:

- Reauthorizes the program from 2014-18
- Establishes a national program at NOAA (save for freshwater, which would fall to EPA)
- Promotes a national strategy to help communities understand, predict, control and mitigate freshwater and marine HAB and hypoxia events; enhancing, coordinating, and assessing the activities of existing HABs and hypoxia programs; providing for development of a comprehensive research plan and action strategy; and requiring an assessment and plan for Great Lakes HABs and hypoxia.

# Funding

- This bill would authorize \$20.5 million to be appropriated for each of the fiscal years 2014 through 2018 to implement the program and the action strategy. Of these appropriations, the new section 610(b) of the HABHRCA would require the Secretary of Commerce to ensure a substantial portion is allocated to extramural research activities.

# HABHRCA History & Status

- Commerce, Science, and Transportation passed measures in 111<sup>th</sup> and 112<sup>th</sup> (never came to floor)
- Passed US Senate; Co-Sponsored by Oregon Senators Wyden and Merkley, and Washington Senator Cantwell (on Commerce)
- No House companion measure
- Assigned to a primary and a secondary House Committee: Science, and Natural Resources
- Current challenge is to ensure the bill gains a hearing in a House Committee, and a “mark-up”.

# Key Individuals in US House

- Peter DeFazio, House District #4, OR
  - Ranking member, House Committee on Natural Resources
- Suzanne Bonamici, House District #1, OR
  - Member, House Science, Space and Technology
- Doc Hastings, House District #4, WA
  - Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
- Derek Kilmer, House District #6, WA
  - Member House Committee on Science, Space and Technology

# Specific Outreach

- Via Email
- Key Points
  - Establish your expertise
  - Seek Committee hearing (Nat Res or Science) and floor vote
  - Point to example within specific House district (include health and economic impact)
  - Ask for action during this Congress (113<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> session)



# Key Contacts (Staff)

- Rep. Bonamici (D-OR-1) – Eric Ffitch  
eric.ffitch@mail.house.gov
- Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA-6) – Megan Thompson  
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- Rep. Doc Hastings (R-WA-4) – Todd Ungerecht  
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- Rep. DeFazio (D-OR-4) – Travis Joseph  
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# DRAFT Letter

I am writing to request that you hold a legislative hearing on S. 1254, the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2013. This important bipartisan legislation passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent on February 12, 2014 and is now pending before the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) and hypoxic events have significant impacts on the Nation's economy. Commercial fisheries lose approximately \$38 million annually as a result of these events. Health costs associated with human illness is estimated at \$37 million per year. Losses to the recreation and tourism industries, combined with costs of monitoring and managing HABs and hypoxic events, amounts to \$7 million annually.

These events affect the entire country, including the Pacific Northwest. For example, high levels of domoic acid in razor clams, oysters, and Dungeness crabs (which can result in serious human illness if consumed) cost Washington State at least \$10 million in lost revenue in 2002 and 2003. These fisheries contribute more than \$70 million to the Washington economy, sustain hundreds of jobs, and are critically important to local tribes and recreational anglers. We are also aware that HABs are present in a number of Eastern Washington lakes – such as Rufus Woods, Lake Spokane, Shelley Lake, Moses Lake, Blythe Lake, Potholes Reservoir, and Lake Bryan – which could limit or restrict recreational opportunities and impact drinking water quality.

Advance warning of HABs and hypoxic events increases the options for managing these events. First it is necessary to understand when and where blooms occur and how they respond to changing environmental conditions, through research and reporting programs. Once this information is collected, it is then possible to predict blooms and help mitigate their impacts on local communities and our natural resources. S. 1254 would help accomplish that task by promoting and coordinating a national research strategy for improving our understanding and prevention of HABs and hypoxia events.

S. 1254 is sensible, bipartisan legislation. We respectfully urge you to hold a legislative hearing and work to move this important bill to the House floor as soon as possible.

# My Contact Info

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