

Rep Posey Floor Statement on
S. 1254 Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research Amendments Act of 2014

Thank you for yielding Mr. Chairman.

Harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events occur throughout the US. They are damaging to water bodies and are harmful to plant and animal life. They also cost local communities millions of dollars and many hours of recreational enjoyment. The adverse effects are both near-term and long-term.

The continued need for advancing research on harmful algal blooms and hypoxia events is very apparent. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation will continue robust funding for this important research, leading us to a better understanding of the causes, effects and steps we can take to prevent harmful algal and hypoxia events.

Reported to the floor with bipartisan support from the Space, Science, and Technology Committee, S.1254 the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research Amendments Act of 2014, includes provisions that Rep. Bonamici and I were privileged to advance. As amended, this bill will better streamline and coordinate existing harmful algal bloom and hypoxia research activities at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other federal agencies.

We place a priority on using research to create implementable action plans to minimize the economic, ecologic, and human health impacts from harmful algal blooms.

By incorporating provisions to encourage collaborative research between local, state and federal agencies we will be able to avoid costly duplicative research which will stretch every dollar further and significantly advance this important research.

In my Congressional District, the Indian River Lagoon has experienced algal blooms each year from 2011 to 2013 leading to the loss of nearly half of the sea grass beds – the primary means of measuring health in the Indian River Lagoon. Prior to 2011, sea grass beds in the lagoon had been on a steady increase for nearly 15 years. The devastating economic and ecologic impacts of these blooms over the past three years can be felt across the entire length of the 156-mile lagoon.

The economic impact of the Indian River Lagoon is approximately \$3.5 billion. A healthy Lagoon is vital for the economic well-being of the Treasure Coast and the Space Coast.

I raised a family on the Lagoon so I can speak from personal experience about the changes we have seen and the benefits of our Lagoon to our community.

Our bill gives researchers another tool to help us better understand, anticipate, control, and mitigate harmful algal blooms like those we have seen in the Indian River Lagoon and in communities across the country.

I would like to thank Chairman Smith and the majority and minority committee staff that worked together to shepherd this bill through committee. I would also like to thank the ranking member of the Environment subcommittee Ms. Bonimici. It was a pleasure to work with you and your staff to make several bipartisan perfecting changes to the Senate bill so this bipartisan measure could make it to the House floor.

I would encourage my colleagues to support the bill before us so that we can reauthorize this important program and continue to advance this research that is so important for communities like the coastal community I am privileged to live in and represent in the Congress.

I yield back Mr. Chairman

###