

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**BILL POSEY**  
8TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

August 3, 2018

Dear Friend,

Work continues in our local communities, at all levels of government, and across Florida's east coast to restore our Lagoon. Our area's world-class institutions of higher learning, environmental and scientific experts, and business leaders continue their collaborative efforts.

I have long participated in these actions and am pleased to update you on significant accomplishments at the federal level to help restore our Lagoon, including:

- ✓ More resources to research and fight algal blooms
- ✓ Assured reliable funding for the Lagoon
- ✓ Establishing a new grant program for estuaries facing serious health challenges
- ✓ Moving forward with projects to remove muck from the Lagoon
- ✓ Founding a bipartisan Estuary Caucus to give our Lagoon a strong voice in Congress
- ✓ Projects to restore the Everglades
- ✓ Marine mammal research and rescue
- ✓ Protecting and re-nourishing our beaches and coastal communities
- ✓ Efforts to address water quality

We know how vital the Lagoon is to our economy and quality of life, and many of us have fond memories from growing up on the Lagoon or raising our families along it. The Lagoon plays a role in preventing coastal erosion, is vital to indigenous and migratory species, and provides an important habitat for a variety of marine plants and animals. Since estuaries are places where fresh water mixes with salt water from the oceans, preserving its delicate balance is important and challenging.

As your representative in Congress, I will keep working with our community to find innovative solutions.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey  
Member of Congress

# Legislative Update to Constituents on Our Lagoon

## Efforts to Preserve Our Lagoon and Restore its Health are Moving Through Congress

Growing up around Cocoa Beach, raising my family along the Lagoon and working in local real estate for many years has helped me understand why it's so important for us to work together to care for our environment. Our quality of life, economy and tourism, property values and the survival of many indigenous species of plant and wildlife depend on our efforts. Advancing common-sense ideas that strengthen our economy, protect our Lagoon and preserve our natural beauty remains a top priority for me.



## Funding the National Estuary Program and Fighting for More Resources

**More Resources for Our Lagoon:** The National Estuary Program (NEP) was created by Congress in 1987 to protect and restore the water quality and ecological integrity of estuaries of national significance. Currently, 28 estuaries throughout our nation have been designated as estuaries of national significance. Because the NEP is an important component in maintaining our nation's environmental treasures like the Indian River Lagoon, I co-authored bipartisan legislation, which was signed into law, to reauthorize and improve this program. Included in this legislation was my bipartisan plan to reprioritize existing federal funds so more money is available through competitive grants for estuaries with critical needs like our Lagoon.

Last year I testified before both the House Budget Committee and the House Appropriations Committee to highlight the importance of the National Estuary Program and why it's continued funding is so critical. I'm pleased to report that not only was the NEP base funding kept intact but that our competitive grants program also received an additional \$1.5 million to be made available for worthy projects and activities that keep our estuaries strong and healthy.

**Fighting Algal Blooms:** Algae blooms, like the ones affecting the Indian River Lagoon, occur throughout the country and the world. Experts still have many questions about the root causes and how to fight them and related hypoxia events. I partnered with Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) to get important algal bloom research legislation through the House and to the President's desk. The bill reauthorized research grants to look at the prevention, causes, and mitigation of algal blooms like the ones in our Lagoon.

## Bipartisan Caucus Gives Our Estuaries a Strong Voice in Congress



**Educating Congress and Raising Awareness:** Last year we worked to establish the first bipartisan Congressional Estuary Caucus to help educate Members of Congress and leaders at all levels of government about the importance of our nation's estuaries, support the National Estuary Program and help give a strong voice in Congress to our Indian River Lagoon and other environmental treasures.

So far forty Members of Congress have joined the Congressional Estuary Caucus, and the Caucus has held eleven successful briefings with national experts examining topics such as algal blooms, coastal resiliency and living shorelines. We've also heard presentations from local leaders such as Lynda Weatherman of the Space Coast EDC, Dr. Duane Defreese of the Indian River Lagoon Council, Dr. Tristan Fiedler and Dr. John Trefry from the Florida Institute of Technology, and Laurilee Thompson, co-owner of Dixie Crossroads and a member of the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Committee. You can find out more about the Congressional Estuary Caucus by visiting [www.posey.house.gov/estuaries/](http://www.posey.house.gov/estuaries/).

## Update on Dredging, Muck Removal and Everglades Restoration Efforts

**Dredging and Muck Removal:** Working with local leaders and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has led to a mutual understanding on the importance of timely removal of muck from the Indian River Lagoon. Originally, permits for dredging faced up to 18 months to gain approval by the NMFS, delaying efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers. Working with NMFS helped them understand the importance of these projects and paved the way for the County to expedite permits in two weeks.

This past spring dredging began in Mims and is continuing. Dredging in Turkey Creek (Palm Bay) is coming to a close. Hurricane Irma caused additional muck deposition which required additional dredging. In total 200,000 cubic yards of muck or 11,000 dump trucks were removed, and this dredged material is being taken to western Brevard and tilled into agricultural land. The City of Cocoa Beach is dredging residential canals and parts of the Lagoon located near those canals. This project is partially funded by the state and the Save Our IR Lagoon half-cent sales tax. Other dredging projects have undergone the permitting process and are targeted to begin next year.

**Everglades Restoration Projects:** Over the long-term redirecting Lake Okeechobee's overflow away from the Indian River Lagoon will help improve the Lagoon's health while also naturally filtering this water. In Congress I have been supportive of projects like repairing the Hoover Dike to help alleviate discharges of nutrient-laden water into the St. Lucie River and the Lagoon, advancing the Ten Mile Creek Preserve Restoration, which will treat storm water run-off before it reaches the Lagoon, and funding the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.



Muck removed from Turkey Creek in Palm Bay

## Protecting Our Beaches, Coastal Communities and Marine Life

**Beach Re-Nourishment:** While restoring our Lagoon is critical, there is more we can do to ensure our environmental treasures are protected. Maintaining our beaches and shores is necessary to promoting tourism and supporting marine life. Our beaches are also the first line of defense against threats posed by hurricanes and other major storms. That's why my office worked with the Army Corps of Engineers to make Mid Reach Beach re-nourishment efforts a top priority in their FY2018 Work Plan. In total \$28.375 million is allocated for Brevard County Mid Reach Beach. This project will help protect our coastal infrastructure and communities from severe damage caused by erosion and flooding.



**Protecting Marine Life:** To further protect our shores and marine life, I introduced bipartisan legislation with members of the Florida delegation to place a moratorium on seismic exploration off the coastline of Florida so we can study its effects on our sea life. There are strong concerns that these seismic activities may be harmful to undersea mammals like dolphins, disrupting their ability to communicate and navigate. The moratorium remains in place until science proves there is minimal impact on fish, sea turtles, and the various marine mammals that inhabit the waters off our coast.

We need to work together, and collaborative efforts by individuals and local, state and federal governments are essential to safeguarding our environment. Some of these partnerships like the Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Program, which receives partial funding through the EPA, have been in jeopardy for many years. It's common to read stories about stranded manatees and other wildlife in our waterways. Time is of the essence to rescue these creatures. That's why every year I have successfully fought to restore proposed funding cuts for this program.

**Addressing Water Quality:** Because estuaries like our Lagoon are places where fresh water mixes with salt water from the oceans, preserving the delicate balance of nature is necessary but can also be challenging. I recently introduced bipartisan legislation to study and monitor the effects of coastal acidification and worked to get additional funding for the Indian River Lagoon to monitor and enhance water quality.