



MEMO FROM WATERKEEPERS FLORIDA

April 8, 2019

TO: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Environment and General Government

FROM: Waterkeepers Florida

RE: **Opposition to SB 1552: Florida Red Tide Mitigation and Technology Development Initiative**

Waterkeepers Florida are opposed to SB 1552 in its current form.

Waterkeepers Florida (WKFL) are united in our belief that red tide control must be achieved through regulation and reduction of nutrient pollution at the source.

This bill ignores the causes of harmful algae blooms (HAB), while seeking to attempt to remediate red tide after-the-fact, and hence will never actually “control” algae blooms, but will generate the deployment of small, targeted efforts at *K. brevis* suppression to be funded by municipalities and wealthy landowners at sites of their choosing, as intensity and size of harmful algae blooms increase unabated. The bill’s partnership between Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and Mote Marine does nothing to address prevention or suppression of nutrient-driven HABs.

Recommended Action: Bill amendment to address prevention and mitigation of red tide through control of nutrient pollution at its source.

Prevention is Key: WKFL supports the elimination the state’s current focus on voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs), and sets forth a tightly-scheduled completion of Clean Water Act (CWA)-mandated enforceable water quality criteria. WKFL supports re-hiring of science and enforcement staff at Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and FWC, to replace the staff fired without cause by former Governor Rick Scott. WKFL supports a unified, strategic research agenda to be shared by all the state’s academic and research institutions, with the goal of characterizing nutrient flows in the state’s surface and ground waters, so that sources and causation may be identified and corrected.

Waterkeepers Florida advocates for stopping pollution at its source.

We represent waterways in communities of over 15 million people spanning the watersheds of the Indian River Lagoon, Collier County, Caloosahatchee River, Tampa Bay, Lake Worth, Matanzas River, Miami, St. Johns River, St. Marys River, Suwannee River, Sarasota Bay, Emerald Coast, and Apalachicola River.

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