Resolution to Restore Funding for the Florida Harmful-Algal-Bloom Task Force

Whereas harmful algal blooms (HABs) occur in fresh and marine waters throughout the state of Florida;

Whereas HABs produce a diverse array of potent toxins that have severe impacts on human health, and aquatic ecosystems;

Whereas HABs have significant economic impacts related to public health, tourism and property values;

Whereas the original Harmful-Algal-Bloom Task Force, after becoming legislatively created in 1999 with a mandate in Ch. 370.06092, F.S. (now Ch. 379.2271, F.S.) was an advisory body to the Director of the Florida Marine Research Institute (FMRI), now the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) and had four specific tasks: 1) determine the status and adequacy of existing information, 2) develop research and monitoring priorities including detection, prediction, mitigation, and control, 3) develop recommendations for government whereby they can create response/contingency plans fitting their specific needs and resources, and 4) make recommendations to FMRI;

Whereas States of Emergencies were declared by the governor of Florida for multiple Florida counties with respect to adverse impacts on the environment, health, the business sector and real property values from severe and widespread harmful algal blooms in 2016 and 2018;

Whereas independent research since 2001, when funding ceased for the Florida Harmful-Algal-Task Force, has provided significant new information on various aspects of HAB problems pertinent to Florida including improved methods for prevention, detection, monitoring, predicting and public health notification; now therefore, be it

Resolved, the undersigned organizations formally request that the Florida Legislature:

1. Identify and authorize adequate funding of not less than four million dollars to implement Ch. 379.2271, F.S., Harmful-Algal-Bloom Task Force during the 2019 Florida Legislative Session for FY 2019-2020;

2. Authorize the Florida Harmful-Algal-Bloom Task Force to develop a report addressing the original four specific tasks of the Florida Harmful-Algal-Bloom Task Force in a current context and identify additional information gaps by October 1, 2019;

3. Expand research priorities and recommendations to include prevention of harmful algal blooms;
4. Require the Florida Harmful-Algal-Bloom Task Force to make fiscal recommendations to the Florida Legislature for future funding cycles that address the recommendations of the report and for administering federal funds and or grants by October 1, 2019.

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