

7/09/2004 Moran Supports Funding for Algal Bloom Research

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today supported legislation that would fund better research into the cause of and ways to combat algal bloom. These bacteria can grow on bodies of water that supply municipal water systems. The Marion Lake has been forced to deal with this problem during the past two years.

"This algae can cause significant damage to a community's water source, as we've seen in Marion County," Moran said. "This additional funding for research will help us to better identify the causes of this disease and better equip us to deal with its damage."

Algal blooms are dense mats of toxic algae that occur both in the ocean and in freshwater. The algal toxins can poison animals in the water and leave the water unusable. When humans consume affected animals, they can suffer severe illness that often results in paralysis or even death. Hypoxia is the effect that occurs when an algal bloom decays, consuming all the oxygen in the water. This creates an environment that essentially chokes all other wildlife, killing plants, fish and other creatures in the affected area.

The legislation supported by Moran, H.R. 1856, updates research programs at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that help scientists to better understand the creation of algal blooms and hypoxia. The legislation also increases the participation of those on the local level so that decisions are being made by the people who deal with the problems.

This legislation now goes to the Senate for consideration.