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Congress of the United States
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July 26, 2016

Jonathan P. Steverson
Secretary
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard M.S. 49
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Secretary Steverson:

I write you today in firm opposition to increased allowable limits for certain chemicals in the new proposed revisions to the Human Health-Based Water Quality Criteria, Proposed Establishment of New Surface Water Classification, Class I-Treated (Treated Potable Water Supplies) rulemaking.

As you know, my district is currently inundated by toxic-blue-green algae, which is due in part by polluted freshwater discharges from Lake Okeechobee. The chemicals in our waterways serve to further degrade our precious ecosystems and harm our communities, businesses, health, and overall way of life.

I join my congressional colleagues and concerned Florida residents in opposition to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's proposed increase in allowable limits for certain toxic chemicals. It is unfathomable to the public that cancer causing chemicals such as benzene and dioxins would be increased at any level, increasing Floridians' exposure to known carcinogens. Benzene has also been found in fracking fluid.

Florida's economy is directly tied to our pristine waterways, and exposing the general public to unnecessary chemicals puts everyone who lives, works, recreates in our waterways, and eats Florida's seafood in jeopardy of potentially developing negative long-term health effects.

This process should not be finalized before filling vacancies on the Environmental Regulations Commission, including the seat reserved for the environmental community. Floridians not only deserve clean water but also a fair opportunity to have their voices heard regarding this proposed increase in pollution. Therefore, I request your full consideration of these concerns and a halt to the proposed weakening of Florida's clean water standards.

Sincerely,

Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS