June 26, 2014

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0903

Dear Senator Nelson,

The Everglades Coalition would like to thank you for taking the lead in battling water quality issues through your sponsorship and championing of The Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2014. Your dedication to protecting Florida’s waters is highly recognized, applauded, and appreciated.

As an alliance of more than fifty local, state and national conservation and environmental organizations dedicated to full restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem, the Everglades Coalition maintains a significant focus on the damaging effects of HABs and hypoxia on our waters. Over the past three years, The Indian River Lagoon alone has lost more than 47,000 acres of sea grass to algae – resulting in the death of native wildlife such as fish, pelicans, dolphins and manatees. This harmful trend has been experienced in each and every estuary within the greater Everglades ecosystem and requires immediate action.

The passage of the aforementioned bill is of critical significance to the Everglades Coalition and Florida residents alike, as it will aid communities greatly affected by outbreaks of HABs and hypoxia whom currently struggle every year with the health, economic, and environmental consequences of these frequent occurrences. The designation of $82 million of federal funds will not only aid the battle against large algae blooms through research and critical scientific studies, but will also provide a basis to support communities struggling through such periods of peak algal blooms. Specifically, the proposal within the bill ensuring that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will send $20.5 million annually through 2018 to local
governments coping with algal outbreaks will make a significant positive impact on numerous affected communities throughout Florida.

The passage of this bill is an important tool in further understanding, anticipating, and mitigating the effects of hypoxia and HABs nationwide, and is a noteworthy step towards restoring the health and quality of our vital waterways in Florida. We thank you for remaining vigilant and acknowledging the link between the quality of our waterways and the health of our residents, wildlife, economy, and environment.

Sincerely,

Cara Capp
National Co-Chair

Jason Totoiu
State Co-Chair