

# Water quality roundtable attracts experts from around the Suncoast



Red tide impacts human health

By ABC7 Staff

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SARASOTA, Fla. (WWSB) - In the wake of a massive red tide outbreak, key stakeholders in the state of water quality in Sarasota Bay met at a roundtable Monday hosted by U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan.

"Red tide has wreaked havoc on marine life, our waters and the many businesses that rely on Florida's tourism-based economy," Buchanan was quoted in a news release.

The Suncoast is currently experiencing severe levels of red tide, which is caused by toxin-producing algae that is extremely deadly to fish and other marine life.

Those in attendance included:

- Adam Blalock, Deputy Secretary for Ecosystems Restoration, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Dr. Thomas Frazer, Dean of the College of Marine Science at the University of South Florida
- Ed Sherwood, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Estuary Program
- Dr. Dave Tomasko, Executive Director, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
- Dr. Michael Mullan, Executive Director, Roskamp Institute
- Jeff Sedacca, Advisor, Gulf Shellfish Institute
- Elliot Falcione, Executive Director, Visit Manatee
- Erin Duggan, Vice President, Visit Sarasota

"Our fresh and saltwater ecosystems are the lifeblood of Florida – critical to the health and happiness of all Floridians and the state's economic well-being," said Frazer. "In fact, the legacy of our leadership will rest squarely on an ability to ensure that water resources in this state are restored and safeguarded in a scientifically sound manner."

"Harmful algal blooms, continued urban development, climate change, and large nutrient discharges all threaten Tampa Bay's recovery," echoed Sherwood, of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. "We must focus our efforts on those actions and investments that can deliver the greatest positive impact for the estuary."

seafood and opportunities to take part in recreational activities that can only be enjoyed when our water quality is high. Together with Florida's leadership and some of the world's best marine biologists, I know we will come up with organic mitigation programs that will minimize Red Tide in the near future"

Sarasota Bay is one of only 28 ecosystems in the entire country that have been formally designated by Congress as an "estuary of national significance." It is home to more than 1,400 native species of diverse plants and iconic wildlife, such as the manatee, the bald eagle, the sea turtle and the bottlenose dolphin. It also contributes nearly \$1.8 billion to Florida's economy, according to the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.

Buchanan co-chaired a 2019 bipartisan meeting of the 29-member Florida congressional delegation focused on combating red tide, toxic algae and examining other water quality issues.

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Employee Worksite \_\_\_\_\_ Employee ID No. (A#) \_\_\_\_\_

As the Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby request that my child/ be released from the COVID-19 Emergency Face Mask Policy requirement for the 2021-2022 school year due to the reason selected below:

My child/I cannot wear a mask.  My child/I cannot wear a face shield.

I understand for everyone's safety, exemption from a face covering may result in additional health room visits, strategic social distancing, additional PPE, and/or other safety protocols.

Parent/Guardian/Employee Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian/Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ONLY** (medical doctors licensed under Chapter 458, Florida Statutes; osteopathic physicians licensed under Chapter 459, Florida Statutes; or advanced registered nurse practitioners licensed under Chapter 464, Florida Statutes)

I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ First and Last Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ cannot wear a  mask  face shield  or both due to a medical, physical, or psychological contraindication. Health Care Provider Stamp (below)

Health Care Provider License No. \_\_\_\_\_

Health Care Provider Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Licensed Health Care Provider Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Licensed Health Care Provider Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

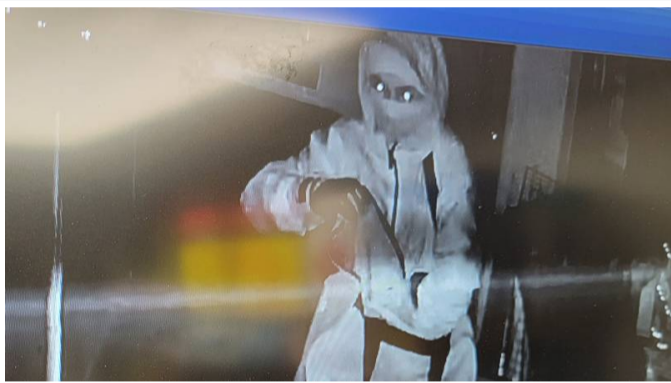
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