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**RED TIDE**

# As red tide conditions persist, local elected officials discuss solutions

Red tide forcing sharks into Floridians' backyard canals experts say

1 minute left



by: [Allyson Henning](#)

Posted: Aug 3, 2021 / 12:49 PM EDT / Updated: Aug 4, 2021 / 11:07 AM EDT

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counties.

Visitors and locals are already tired of the impacts from red tide and waterfront businesses are seeking a break.

Meantime, local leaders are gathering to address the ongoing issue.

Congressman Vern Buchanan hosted a roundtable discussion Monday morning focusing on water quality and red tide. Officials from the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program, Roskamp Institute, Visit Sarasota, and Visit Manatee took part along with several other local stakeholders.



Photo: WFLA

the cost to upgrade infrastructure.

“It just blew my mind how much money Sarasota is having to spend right now to make their systems better. It is costly, but it needs to be done,” said Capt. Moore.

Congressman Buchanan says the issues may be expensive, but must be addressed to protect water quality for future generations.

“I really do believe we might not be where we want to be today, but we can be in the next 10 or 15 years if we all work together and we’ve got to make the investments,” said Congressman Buchanan. “You’ve got to spend \$150 million on this Bee Ridge facility, I said so be it. We’ve got to find a way to take care of it if it is a big problem one way or the other. Same thing with Piney Point, you can’t keep pushing these things down the road. You’ve got to deal with them because we haven’t dealt with them effectively in the past,” he continued.

Buchanan said he believes water quality is an issue at the top of the list for many Floridians.

“It is not a Republican or Democrat issue. We are all working together. It is not just this region, it is across the state,” said the Congressman.

Agriculture Nikki Fried agreed, telling 8 On Your Side ‘water should never be a political issue’.

“We all live here. We all drink water. We all go onto the waterways. This cannot be a political issue. We have to always be working together,” said Commissioner Fried.

“Everybody needs to take their partisan hats away and do what is right for the people and for environment,” she continued.

Commissioner Fried got a firsthand look at the current water quality in Sarasota Bay. She joined Sarasota Police and Mayor Hagen Brody on a boat tour throughout the city Monday afternoon.



Photo: WFLA

“I am nervous about it. I don’t want to see those clumps of fish start to decay and further fuel red tide. That is one of the concerns not only we have, but our community has as well. We are going to be taking a look at over the next couple of days some ways to step up our cleaning efforts not just for our shoreline and beaches, but also looking at our waterways to do so as well,” said Mayor Brody.

During a news conference Monday afternoon, Fried announced the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Agricultural Water Policy Clean Water Initiative. The initiative updates and strengthens the department’s water policies to better protect the state’s natural resources.

“For the first time ever, the Florida Department of Agriculture is conducting in-person visits in cooperation with our agriculture stakeholders rather than relying on voluntary self-reporting when it comes to compliance. For the first time ever, we will be taking action against those refusing to comply with the state law to ensure that the best management practices are being properly implemented. For the first time ever we will be working with producers corrective action plans and refer cases

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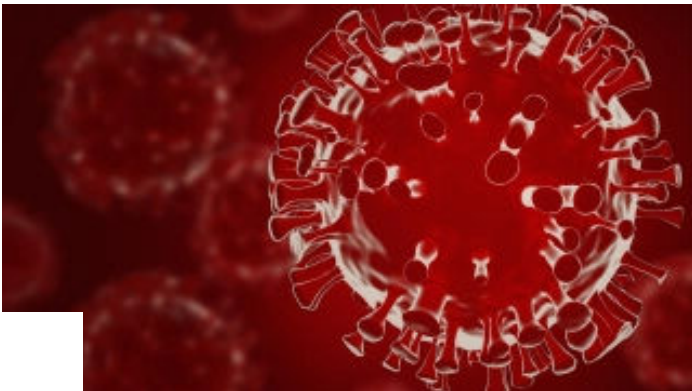
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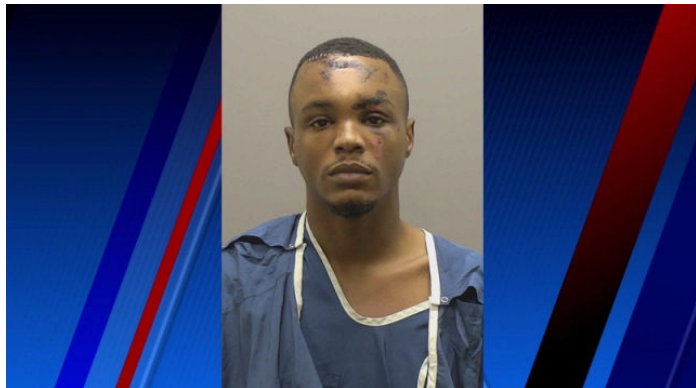




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2:27 PM

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