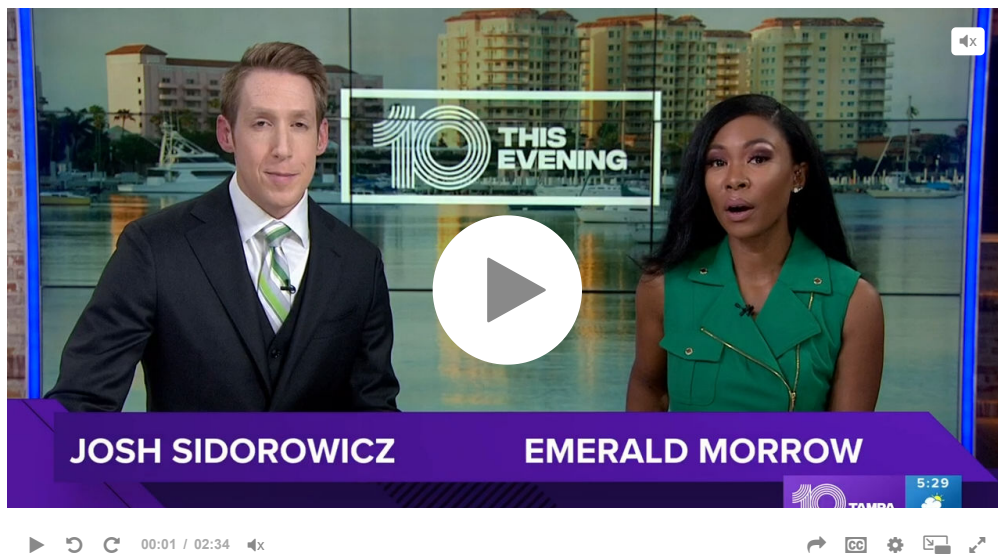


MANATEE COUNTY

US congressman meets Manatee County leaders for round table talks on red tide

U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan is proposing a bill to see federal agencies and dollars join local government responses to red tide impacts.



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Published: 8:02 PM EDT March 17, 2023

Updated: 8:02 PM EDT March 17, 2023



BRADENTON BEACH, Fla. — The latest red tide report from the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) shows conditions have somewhat improved.

Beaches in the southern part of the Tampa Bay area especially had better conditions with a few areas showing high concentrations of red tide and several showing moderate concentrations.

Last week, concerns grew at the extended presence of high red tide concentrations at several beaches in Southwest Florida and how it impacted spring break plans for many. The red tide boom interrupted business and community events and killed lots of marine life.

"We came knowing that we might be in the house and we might be doing more things by the pool, but we were pleasantly surprised that we could manage at the beach and just play it safe," Dana Reddrick, a tourist from Ocala, said.

The issue has now gotten the attention of local elected leaders in Washington. U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan (R – Congressman 16th District, Longboat Key) hosted a roundtable discussion about

the recent high levels of red tide in Southwest Florida.

Buchanan said he would call for federal government help to the coastal communities and discussed ways to solve this long-standing problem with local experts and concerned citizens.

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"It's not just about the beaches and tourism. It's about real estate, it's about jobs. It impacts who we are especially when you look at most of the population growth are on our coast, so it's a big deal," Buchanan said.

He is proposing a bill to see federal agencies and dollars join local government responses to red tide impacts.

"There's a lot of infrastructure projects we can do here that'll make a big difference to water quality and it's going to be expensive, but it's the right thing to do," Buchanan said.

Local environmental experts said that along with mitigation strategies like reducing nutrient loads, any legislation is an added bonus

"We need legislative support at all levels for doing a better job with our wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, that's number one," Dr. David Tomasko with the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program said.

"We want money to be available, we want more research into mitigation. Our infrastructure is aging and our population increasing this is part of the problem that we've got," Tomasko explained.

To enjoy better water and air quality and the luxury of clean beaches, Reddrick agrees with the experts that people have to do their part

"The things that we are doing to the environment, if we can correct that, I think any measure that we can take to improve that would be very important for our economy, and for the people in the health of all of us," Reddrick said.

Buchanan's legislation proposal is titled "The Protecting Local Communities from Harmful Algal Blooms Act" and would include algae blooms as major disasters.

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