

S 1701

Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2011

Congress: 112 (2011–2013, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Environmental Protection

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Sponsor

Name: Sen. Snowe, Olympia J. [R-ME]

Party: Republican • **State:** ME • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (12 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Begich, Mark [D-AK]	D · AK		Oct 13, 2011
Sen. Cardin, Benjamin L. [D-MD]	D · MD		Oct 13, 2011
Sen. Gillibrand, Kirsten E. [D-NY]	D · NY		Oct 13, 2011
Sen. Nelson, Bill [D-FL]	D · FL		Oct 13, 2011
Sen. Rockefeller, John D., IV [D-WV]	D · WV		Oct 13, 2011
Sen. Whitehouse, Sheldon [D-RI]	D · RI		Oct 13, 2011
Sen. Boxer, Barbara [D-CA]	D · CA		Nov 1, 2011
Sen. Cantwell, Maria [D-WA]	D · WA		Nov 1, 2011
Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME]	R · ME		Nov 1, 2011
Sen. Wyden, Ron [D-OR]	D · OR		Dec 12, 2011
Sen. Merkley, Jeff [D-OR]	D · OR		Feb 13, 2012
Sen. Blumenthal, Richard [D-CT]	D · CT		May 15, 2012

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Reported By	Nov 13, 2012

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Environmental Protection

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
112 HR 2484	Related bill	Feb 9, 2012: Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 271.

Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Amendments Act of 2011 - (Sec. 4) Amends the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 to set forth as the purposes of such Act: (1) to provide for the development and coordination of a comprehensive and integrated national program to address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; (2) to provide for the assessment of environmental, socioeconomic, and human health impacts of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia and to integrate such assessment into marine and freshwater resource decisions; and (3) to facilitate efforts to develop and implement harmful algal bloom and hypoxia response plans, strategies, and tools.

(Sec. 5) Revises requirements concerning membership of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia, including requiring the Task Force to have a representative from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

(Sec. 6) Requires the Task Force to: (1) establish the National Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Program; and (2) develop, publish in the Federal Register, submit to Congress, and periodically review and revise as necessary a national harmful algal blooms and hypoxia action strategy. Sets forth the Task Force's functions with respect to the Program and the coordination of federal research that addresses the chemical, biological, and physical components of marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.

Gives the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the primary responsibility for administering the Program. Requires the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to:

- develop and promote a national strategy to understand, detect, predict, control, mitigate, and respond to marine and freshwater harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events;
- prepare work and spending plans for implementing the Program's activities and developing and implementing the regional research and action plans;
- administer merit-based, competitive grant funding to support the Program's projects and to address the research and management needs and priorities identified in the action plans;
- coordinate and work cooperatively with regional, state, tribal, and local government agencies and programs that address marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;
- coordinate with the Secretary of State to support international efforts on harmful algal bloom and hypoxia information sharing, research, mitigation, control, and response activities;
- identify additional research, development, and demonstration needs and priorities relating to monitoring, prevention, control, mitigation, and response to marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;
- integrate, coordinate, and augment existing education programs to improve public understanding and awareness of the causes, impacts, and mitigation efforts for marine and freshwater harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;
- facilitate and provide resources to train state and local coastal and water resource managers in the methods and technologies for monitoring, controlling, and mitigating harmful algal blooms and hypoxia;
- support regional efforts to control and mitigate outbreaks through communication of the contents of the action plans to state and local stakeholders, maintenance of online data portals for information about harmful algal blooms and hypoxia, and oversight of the development, review, and updating of such plans;
- convene at least one Task Force meeting annually;
- maintain and enhance NOAA's existing competitive programs relating to marine and freshwater algal blooms and hypoxia;
- carry out marine and Great Lakes harmful algal bloom and hypoxia events response activities;
- establish new programs and infrastructure to develop and enhance critical observations, monitoring, modeling,

data management, information dissemination, and operational forecasts;

- enhance communication and coordination among agencies carrying out harmful algal bloom and hypoxia activities;
- leverage existing resources and expertise available from local research universities and institutions; and
- increase the availability of analytical facilities and technologies, operational forecasts, and reference and research materials to public and private entities.

Requires the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in consultation with the Under Secretary, to: (1) carry out the duties assigned to the Under Secretary under this Act and the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998; (2) research the ecology of freshwater harmful algal blooms; (3) monitor and respond to freshwater harmful algal blooms events in lakes (except for the Great Lakes), rivers, and reservoirs; (4) mitigate and control freshwater harmful algal blooms; and (5) recommend the amount of funding required to carry out cooperative efforts for inclusion in the President's annual budget request to Congress.

(Sec. 7) Requires the Under Secretary to develop and submit to the Task Force for approval a research and action plan for each region. Requires the Under Secretary to identify appropriate elements for each region, including: (1) baseline research needed to understand the biological, physical, and chemical conditions that cause, exacerbate, and result from harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; (2) priorities for ecological and socioeconomic research on issues related to, and impacts of, harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; (3) research, development, and demonstration activities needed to develop and advance technologies for minimizing the occurrence of harmful algal blooms and hypoxia and for improving capabilities to predict, monitor, prevent, control, and mitigate harmful algal blooms and hypoxia; and (4) state, tribal, and local government actions that may be implemented to monitor, minimize, reduce, and address harmful algal blooms and hypoxia.

Requires the Under Secretary to: (1) begin developing the regional research and action plans for at least a third of the regions within nine months after enactment of this Act, beginning with regions that historically have the greatest record of harmful algal blooms or the largest perennial hypoxic zones; (2) begin developing the regional research and action plans for at least another third of the regions within 21 months; (3) begin developing the regional research and action plans for the remaining regions within 33 months; and (4) ensure that each regional research and action plan developed is completed and approved by the Task Force within 12 months after the date that development of the regional research and action plan begins and updated at least once every five years after completion.

Requires the Under Secretary to make funding available to eligible organizations to implement the research, monitoring, forecasting, modeling, and response actions included under each approved regional research and action plan.

(Sec. 8) Requires the Under Secretary, within two years of the submission of the action strategy, to report to the appropriate congressional committees on the annual Task Force meetings, the activities carried out under the Program and the regional research and action plans, the progress made on implementing the action strategy, and any need to revise or terminate activities or projects under the Program. Requires the Task Force to report to Congress within five years after enactment of this Act on harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in marine and freshwater systems.

(Sec. 9) Requires the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force, within 12 months after enactment of this Act and biennially thereafter, to report to appropriate congressional committees and the President on the progress made by Task Force-directed activities carried out or funded by EPA and other state and federal partners toward attainment of the Coastal Goal of the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan of 2008.

(Sec. 10) Authorizes the departments and agencies represented on the Inter-Agency Task Force to participate in

interagency financing and to share, transfer, receive, obligate, and expend funds appropriated to any member of the Task Force for the purposes of carrying out administrative or programmatic projects or activities under such Act.

(Sec. 11) Authorizes appropriations for the Program.

Actions Timeline

- **Nov 13, 2012:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Rockefeller with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. With written report No. 112-237.
- **Nov 13, 2012:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 542.
- **Nov 2, 2011:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Oct 13, 2011:** Introduced in Senate
- **Oct 13, 2011:** Sponsor introductory remarks on measure. (CR S6507)
- **Oct 13, 2011:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (text of measure as introduced: CR S6507-6510)