

Sutton, Kaitlyn

From: LISA JENSEN <lisaconnie@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 5:35 PM
To: Sutton, Kaitlyn
Subject: Water Quality in Florida

Hello, Ms. Sutton!

I am writing at the urging of my representative, Congressman Brian Mast.

Back in 2018 when the measured levels of toxins in our water was “more than 60 times what is safe for human contact” (per the congressman’s email), I had a terrible personal experience connected to that toxicity.

My husband and I live in North Palm Beach and try to spend as much time outside as possible. Florida’s environment is one of its key attractions, after all!

The event I wanted to tell you about happened in late September 2018. A friend from Tampa came over to Martin County to visit her parents, and we decided to meet halfway between my house and theirs for lunch and to catch up. We chose a restaurant in Hobe Sound and sat outside. The food and ambience were both wonderful, and because we hadn’t seen each other in quite some time, we had a long, leisurely lunch. Though everything was great, I began to feel very poorly. Sore throat and burning eyes. As we said our goodbyes, a dull headache that had been cooking got quite a bit worse to the point where I took some Advil before I started the 30 min. drive home. On my way, I had to pull the car over and rest. Once home, I washed my face and eyes with cold water and went to bed.

My husband was the one who put it together...

The restaurant where we sat outside and enjoyed the great breeze for that very long lunch is one mile due west and on the same street as a public beach. My husband thought we were stupid for sitting outside so near to the water when the news was full of stories of the toxic algae blooms. Sadly, on this score, he might have been right.

It took me more than a few days to feel back to normal.

If the toxicity was bad enough to sideline me and I wasn’t even in the water, I can’t imagine how the swimmers, surfers, snorkelers, paddle boarders and FISH made out during that period. What about the tourists to our shores who didn’t expect to have this situation impede on their vacations? What about mothers taking their kids outside to play, whether at the beach or a nearby playground?

Florida’s appeal to those of us who live here, as well as to the many visitors whose dollars help our economy, is predicated on keeping our environment clean enough to enjoy. Please put the full force of the DEP into keeping it that way.

Thank you very much!
Sincerely,

Lisa Jensen
North Palm Beach, FL