

Sutton, Kaitlyn

From: Rona Tattersdill <rona.photo@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 22, 2019 5:08 PM
To: Sutton, Kaitlyn
Subject: Red Tide

Dear Kaitlyn,

I think it is time for all of us living in Florida, full or part time, to wake up and try and do something to contribute towards saving the quality of our water before it is too late.

Tourism is already deeply affected and I know many friends who are considering selling or wintering elsewhere.

It can literally all start at grass root level. We can begin in our own gardens by stopping the use of chemical fertilizers on the lawns, or sprays on our plants. Try changing your landscaping to suit the climate and use sand, gravel and rocks and if you have a lawn, try clover or an artificial grass. Banning the sale of all chemical fertilizers and sprays would be even better.

Also regulations need to come into effect as soon as possible on the use of agricultural fertilizers and the run off from the sugar industry into the waterways and rivers which drain into Lake Okeechobee. Added to this is the pollution from the phosphate mines, which has drained into the aquifer and is feeding and causing the constant bloom of algae in the Gulf of Mexico.

What I find most disturbing, is the virtual lack of advice or warnings on the beaches where we live. Visitors arriving here for the first time are not told of the possible health hazards involved by going onto the beach and breathing in the red tide. They are not informed of what risks they may be taking by entering the water. People need to be informed so that they can make their own decisions. I would suggest large story type information boards about *Karenia Brevis* and asthma and people could also be informed of how they can help back at their own homes by not using fertilizers and sprays in their gardens.. It isn't right that tourists and residents are left uninformed.

What is this constant algae bloom doing to our health? We see the terrible effects on the fish, turtles, dolphins, manatees and birds. I believe that we also are under threat.

The time for complacency is over. Action is needed and immediately. Tourism is the number one industry in Florida and without it a huge and devastating blow will occur to the economy. Hotels, restaurants, cafes, guest homes, rentals, fishing, and all tourist related businesses are already suffering. We can no longer bury our heads in the sand. It is time to act.

Rona Tattersdill
Naples, Florida