

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gov. Scott Issues Emergency Order to Combat Algal Blooms in South Florida

CAPE CORAL, Fla. – Governor Rick Scott today issued an emergency order in Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties to help combat algal blooms caused by Lake Okeechobee water discharges from the Army Corps of Engineers. This emergency declaration allows the Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District to waive various restrictions and regulations to store water in additional areas south of the Lake, which will help alleviate the Army Corps of Engineers' water discharges that are causing harmful algal blooms in Florida's rivers and coastal estuaries. This emergency action furthers the Governor's previous action of directing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to identify additional opportunities to move water south from Lake Okeechobee. Click [HERE](#) for the Executive Order.

Governor Scott said, "As Governor, it is my duty to protect Floridians, no matter what it takes. Today, our state is once again facing a crisis from water releases controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This has prompted me to issue an emergency declaration, so our state agencies can do everything in their power to minimize the harmful impacts these releases are having on our communities.

"Last week, we learned that Florida will be receiving its fair share of federal funding following a devastating Hurricane season in 2017. At our urging, part of this money will be used to speed the critical repairs to the Herbert Hoover Dike, a long overdue federal project, to help Lake Okeechobee store more water to protect our

communities. But let me be clear – simply providing money for a project that should have been completed decades ago is not enough. Congress and the federal government need to do more to help families who are facing harmful algal blooms because of the water they are releasing into our communities from Lake Okeechobee. This includes approving the acceleration of the EAA reservoir that I signed into law last year. The fact that Congress has failed to act to solve this problem is frustrating, but not surprising.

“Now, since we are facing more harmful algal blooms from federal water releases, the state is taking a multifaceted approach to protect families. We will stop at nothing to solve this problem – our families deserve nothing less.”

The Governor announced this action following a tour of the Caloosahatchee River where he received a briefing on the additional water monitors he directed DEP to deploy to the river last month. Also, last year, the Governor signed a bill that expedited the EAA reservoir that will provide relief from the Army Corps’ releases and secured full federal funding to fix the Herbert Hoover Dike to meet his goal of completing the project three years ahead of schedule. Governor Scott is the first governor in Florida history to dedicate state funding to this federal project, having secured \$100 million to jumpstart the project after decades of Congressional inaction.

THE GOVERNOR’S EMERGENCY ORDER WILL DO THE FOLLOWING:

- **The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**

The Governor has directed DEP to dedicate more staffing to water testing and sampling. Other actions include a statewide hotline (855-305-3903) for the public to report issues with algae, and a [website](#) so Floridians can be fully informed on the location of algal blooms and results of water testing.

The Governor has directed DEP to establish a grant program to provide local governments with funding to contract clean up services.

- **The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)**

FWC's Research Institute will dedicate more staff to support DEP's water testing and sampling.

- **The Florida Department of Health (DOH)**

The Governor has directed DOH to enhance community outreach efforts. Also, DOH is prepared to enhance the use of signage to keep Floridians and the state's visitors informed on the dangers of algal blooms.

- **VISIT FLORIDA**

VISIT FLORIDA will do outreach to tourism partners in the affected areas to identify ways to minimize the impact to the state's tourism industry.

- **Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)**

The Governor has directed DEO to identify businesses who could be affected by the harmful algal blooms. DEO will work hand-in-hand with local businesses and business support organizations to provide resources and assistance to any Florida business impacted by algal blooms.

- **The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**

The Governor has directed FDOT to identify any road works projects that can be initiated or accelerated to assist with flood control and water direction in communities surrounding the lake and its water sources.

- **South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)**

Using this emergency declaration, DEP will work with the SFWMD to identify additional storage north and south of Lake Okeechobee, including the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes to decrease water inflows and help to reduce water levels in the Lake. These actions include:

- Using the S-5A Pump Station in Palm Beach County to move 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) out of the L-8 Canal to prevent water from flowing back into Lake Okeechobee.
- Moving water to tide through every available structure, including the Hillsboro, North New River and Miami canals.
- Using the S-34 Structure to move 200 cfs out of Water Conservation Area 2A into the North New River in Broward County.
- Fully utilizing the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin and L-8 Flow Equalization Basin, both components of Gov. Scott's Restoration Strategies Plan, to store water.
- Storing water on public lands through the Dispersed Water Management program.
- Working with private landowners to store water on their properties.

- **Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM)**

The Governor has directed FDEM to host regular calls with county emergency management officials to ensure that all needs are met. FDEM will stand ready to support any local emergency operations.
