



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUL 20 2016

OFFICE OF WATER

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter dated June 13, 2016, requesting an update on the progress the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has made since the development of the "Algal Toxin Risk Assessment and Management Strategic Plan for Drinking Water" in November 2015. Management of harmful algal blooms in drinking waters poses many challenges, ranging from understanding health effects, to developing viable monitoring, analytical, and treatment methods to determining effective strategies for preventing cyanotoxins in drinking water. The EPA has made strides to address these challenges through many of the activities identified in the Strategic Plan. The progress on noteworthy projects can be found in the enclosed detailed summary of key completed and ongoing activities.

The agency's overall progress on Strategic Plan activities includes the following: continuing to assess human health effects and a list of algal toxins of concern; providing guidance and technical assistance to states and utilities for improving cyanotoxin treatment options; developing new analytical methods; increasing laboratory capacity; providing guidance and technical assistance for the public, states, and utilities to improve existing monitoring programs; and developing modeling tools to better understand the causes of HABs and improve source water protection strategies for HABs mitigation and prevention. Furthermore, we remain committed to improving scientific understanding of HABs and cyanotoxins through work detailed in our 2016-2019 research cycle.

A list of recent cyanobacteria and HAB publications authored and coauthored by EPA staff is included in the enclosed summary. Additionally, the agency has sought input from stakeholders and obtained information and support that will improve public health protections from cyanotoxins in drinking water. Key stakeholders involved in these efforts are those from local and state governments, academia, and drinking water utilities and their representatives. Furthermore, in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the EPA co-chairs the Interagency Workgroup on the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act to coordinate and collaborate developing HAB modelling and management tools, assessments, and reports. The agency will continue to partner with these stakeholders and other federal agencies to support research and to encourage outreach and collaboration in developing analytical methods, monitoring strategies, treatment options, communication plans, and effective source water protection tools and resources.

Thank you for your continued interest and support in protecting public health from the risks of cyanotoxins in drinking water. The agency is committed to improving public health protection and making continued progress on activities discussed in the Strategic Plan. The agency will continue tracking the status of activities discussed in the Strategic Plan to ensure timely progress is made, and we expect to have a detailed summary of progress available at the end of 2016. To provide current information to the public regarding the EPA's work on HABs and cyanotoxins, the agency maintains a web portal at <https://www.epa.gov/cyanoHabs>. The website features information on freshwater HABs including causes, detection, treatment, health and ecological effects, current research activities in the U.S. as well as policies and regulations for cyanotoxins at the state and international levels.

If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Cathy Davis, in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at [Davis.CatherineM@epa.gov](mailto:CatherineM@epa.gov) or (202) 564-2703.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joel Beauvais".

Joel Beauvais  
Deputy Assistant Administrator

Enclosure