

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 10, 2018

The Honorable Linda McMahon  
Administrator  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 Third Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator McMahon:

Several Florida communities are once again confronted with harmful algal blooms that could have damaging and long-term impacts on small businesses located near Lake Okeechobee. While the State of Florida, Congress, and the administration continue to work towards meaningful efforts to mitigate and prevent future blooms, I write to request that Small Business Administration resources be made available to those currently being affected.

Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Okeechobee counties rely heavily on clean waters and their environmental resources, drawing millions of visitors a year. Unfortunately, businesses in these counties potentially face significant economic consequences from the negative impacts of harmful algal blooms on incomes drawn from fishing, real estate, and tourism. With nearly 90 percent of Lake Okeechobee currently covered by toxic blue-green algae, residents are already bracing for a repeat of 2016 when many of these same communities were victims of a debilitating summer of foul water conditions.

On Sunday, July 8, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers temporarily suspended scheduled Lake Okeechobee discharges in response to public concerns. The following day, a state of emergency was declared by Florida Governor Rick Scott for Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Okeechobee counties. Keeping the families and businesses impacted by this damaging algal bloom event in mind, I respectfully request that you use available resources to quickly open a Small Business Administration Business Recovery Center, as was done during similar discharges in 2016, to help Florida business owners cope with this disaster-in-the-making.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator