

Washington, DC -- Congressmen Connie Mack (FL-14), Vern Buchanan (FL-13) and Kathy Castor (FL-11) are continuing to fight for funding for research on red tide, a naturally-occurring algal bloom that causes respiratory problems in humans and kills fish, shellfish, manatees and coral reefs.

Castor, a member of the House Rules Committee, successfully fought to include an authorization of \$30 million for each of the next three years for red tide research in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill. In addition, Buchanan requested the authorization in a letter to the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science. This provision is one of the tenets of H.R. 1091, the Save Our Shores Act, which Mack introduced and Buchanan and Castor cosponsored earlier this year.

Despite the successful and important effort to increase the authorization for red tide research to \$30 million, the FY 2008 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill contains only \$8.9 million in actual research dollars – far less than what is actually needed to sufficiently address the scourge of red tide.

However, this afternoon during debate on the House floor, Mack obtained a commitment from Congressman Alan Mollohan (D-WV), Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, that he will work to find ways to increase the actual funding for red tide research.

Mack said, "The inclusion of a \$90 million authorization for red tide research is a win for Southwest Florida. For too long, our shores have been plagued by this nuisance, which has long-lasting economic, environmental, and health implications for the region. The sooner we can determine what is causing these extended blooms, the sooner we can develop solutions to prevent red tide from destroying our coastline and economy. I am pleased that we were able to highlight the importance of this funding and I look forward to working with Chairman Mollohan and my colleagues to increase funding for this important research."

"In recent years, extended and severe bouts of red tide have killed sea life, sent people with respiratory problems to emergency rooms and cost our economy millions of dollars in lost revenues," said Buchanan whose district includes Mote Marine Laboratory. "The provision mirrors our legislation by authorizing more federal dollars for research that can be used to find solutions to harmful algal blooms and their devastating effects on marine life, human health and

our economy. I will continue to fight for additional funding for this important priority.”

“Our beautiful coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico continue to suffer from red tide outbreaks. Red tide brings fish-killing toxins to our waters. Red tide sea spray can irritate the eyes and lungs of all of us who live in the beautiful Tampa Bay area. This bill will fund research into the causes and effects of this serious problem that threatens our sea life, tourist industry and families,” said Castor.

“It is time we pay attention to this devastating organism,” Castor continued. “My amendment would authorize \$90 million over three years to research red tide and other harmful algae blooms.

“Talented scientists at USF-St. Petersburg’s marine biology center and Mote Marine Laboratory at Longboat Key should be first in line with proposals,” Castor concluded. “The sooner we understand what causes red tide, the sooner we will have the solutions to fight it and ensure that it will not devastate our beautiful coastline or harm our families or economy.”

H.R. 1091, the Save Our Shores Act, authorizes \$90 million over a three-year period for competitive, peer-reviewed scientific research on red tide and other harmful algal blooms and requires a Task Force of scientists to report the results of this research annually to Congress.

The Save Our Shores Act already has 28 cosponsors, and Mack is currently working with his colleagues to obtain a hearing on the legislation in the House Science Committee.

The House is expected to vote on the fiscal year 2008 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill tomorrow.