

## Sierra Club's Statement to Governor Scott on the Florida Algae Crisis

[Presented to the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board on July 14, 2016, by Diana Umpierre, Sierra Club Everglades Coordinator]

For six years, the Scott Administration has failed to acquire Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) land, despite repeated ecological collapses in our estuaries from Lake Okeechobee pollution and the insufficient flows of freshwater going to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. Our coastal communities along the Indian River Lagoon and the Southwest Florida Gulf Coast continue to face complete devastation. The water is guacamole thick. The air is rancid. Even those who wear industrial respirators are overcome.

You must stop releasing Lake Okeechobee water east to the Indian River Lagoon, southeast to the Lake Worth Lagoon, or west to Fort Myers and the Gulf of Mexico. You must take emergency action to move that water south. And you must start planning now for storage, treatment, and conveyance in the EAA for the purpose of Everglades Restoration, and do so in a way that does not negatively impact the residents of the EAA represented here today. Sierra Club joins the communities around Lake Okeechobee in demanding immediate federal and state action to expedite needed repair and strengthen the Herbert Hoover Dike [the dike around Lake Okeechobee].

The world has taken notice through national and international press. The state's tourism brand is tainted. Fish and manatees are dying. Beaches are closed. As the algae spreads, home values are plummeting. (continued next column)

We need a plan to store, clean, and convey the water south in the sugar lands. This has to begin now. The money is there to acquire the land. The voters voted for it. The sugar industry must share some adversity in this time of emergency. Why is it okay to flood the estuaries, but not the land planted in sugar? Why aren't the sugar growers offering to help? It is time to send water south for the sake of us all.

## San Francisco Bans Styrofoam

In late June the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a ban on the sale of polystyrene foam, popularly known by the trademarked name Styrofoam. Foam packing, cups, and mooring buoys will be prohibited starting Jan. 1, 2017. The latest ban, extends a 2006 ordinance that ordered prepared-food merchants to stop using all polystyrene containers. Plastic foam products for crafts and insulation will not be affected by the ban.

The Board of Supervisors granted grocers a six-month waiver to find eco-friendly packaging for meats and fish. Taxing cigarette purchases to fund cleaning cigarette butts off sidewalks and requiring new buildings to have water-bottle filling stations are some of the city's other environmental policy initiatives.

Polystyrene disintegrates slowly in landfills, taking centuries to break down entirely. There are a few polystyrene recycling centers in San Francisco, such as GreenCitizen and Recology, but they can only make a small dent in the 25 billion polystyrene cups Americans throw away annually.

While there's been promising research on worms that eat polystyrene, scientists need to study their waste to make sure whatever is processed is safe. Environmentalists are also concerned about polystyrene foam ending up in the water, where the material falls apart and can look like fish eggs to hungry predators.

More than 100 cities, including Seattle, St. Louis, and Miami, have banned polystyrene foam packaging partially or completely.

[from: <http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/07/01/san-francisco-bans-polystyrene-foam?cmpid=tpdaily-eml-2016-07-04-NwB>] by Gwendolyn Wu]

## Boycott of Wendy's Continues

With human rights for farmworkers gaining ground in tomato fields up the East Coast and in Florida strawberries, the Coalition for Immokalee Workers launched a boycott of Wendy's fast food chain in a struggle to strengthen and expand all they have fought for and won. This boycott action continues because Wendy's has not only shifted from purchasing tomatoes in Florida to buying them from Mexico, but it now purchases from a grower who in 2013 was found to be holding hundreds of workers against their will in egregious conditions. For more information and to take the pledge to boycott, go to: [www.boycott-wendys.org/](http://www.boycott-wendys.org/)

## The Plastic Free July Challenge

Disposable shopping bags, water bottles, drinking straws, and to-go boxes are some of the plastic litter that can be found on sidewalks or washed up on beaches around the world. How tough would it be to give up single-use plastic items? "Plastic Free July" is a challenge that seeks to raise awareness of and reduce the amount of plastic in our lives.

The challenge was started by government officials in Perth, Australia, in 2011, and has spread to 90 countries this year. It asks people to refuse single-use plastic throughout the month of July. If that sounds too daunting, just try to ditch four of the most common plastic items: disposable bags, water bottles, coffee cups, and straws.

Some ways to cut down on plastic include using reusable containers for take home boxes, saying no to straws, and carrying reusable shopping bags. But obviously there is some plastic packaging you simply can't avoid. Participants are encouraged to collect all their unavoidable single-use plastic and share it on social media at the end of the month. They are also encouraged to reuse the plastic items they have, such as plastic utensils, whenever possible.

Each day in the U.S., 50 million plastic water bottles are thrown away instead of recycled. The average person in North America or Europe uses about 220 pounds of disposable plastic per year. Some of that ends up sitting in landfills, where it can take 450 to 1,000 years to decompose. Much of the rest floats through the world's marine ecosystems. Every year plastic waste causes approximately \$13 billion in destruction to the world's beaches, according to the United Nations Environment Programme.

[Excerpted from: [www.takepart.com/article/2016/07/11/plastic-free-july-beyond-bag-bans?cmpid=tpnews-eml-2016-07-16-weekly](http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/07/11/plastic-free-july-beyond-bag-bans?cmpid=tpnews-eml-2016-07-16-weekly)] by Jillian Frankel

## Sustainable Seafood for Summer Dining

In hot weather, we want to eat more lightly and minimize time spent in the kitchen. Seafood is a natural choice, but an ever-expanding list of what fish to avoid for sustainability reasons makes deciding difficult. Although overfishing has seriously depleted the oceans, there are still some species that can be enjoyed without harming their populations or ecosystem. Below are five suggestions for responsible seafood.

**Alaskan stocks of salmon** are healthy, even thriving, because of good management practices. Wild Alaskan salmon mostly comes from these five Pacific species: king (aka chinook); sockeye (aka red); coho (aka silver); chum (aka keta, silverbrite, dog); and pink (aka humpy).

**Pacific halibut**, found from the Bering Sea to Northern California, comes from a well-managed fishery, with low rates of bycatch and little habitat damage.

Sweet, mild-flavored **mahi-mahi** or dolphinfish is a highly migratory species and thus less prone to being overfished from a single habitat area. The fish is also relatively short-lived (maximum of five years) and reproduces quickly and often, which also helps maintain healthy populations.

Aquaculture isn't all bad. **Mussel** cultivation receives high scores from environmental organizations, because, like **oysters** and other filter feeders, the bivalves need ultraclean waters in which to flourish. No feed or chemicals are used, and most mussels are cultivated on lines suspended from rafts, preventing damage to the ocean floor.

Sweet, buttery **barramundi**, a relatively new fish to the American market (native to Australia's northern tropical waters and parts of Southeast Asia), is more often available frozen than fresh. *Australis*, an innovative company started by ecologist-turned-aquaculturalist Josh Goldman and based in Massachusetts, raises barramundi in closed recirculating tanks and purifies and recycles 99 % of its water, with almost no discharge of solids or nutrients leaving the farm. The fish are free of antibiotics, chemicals, and colorants.

[Excerpted from:

[www.takepart.com/article/2016/07/20/sustainable-summer-seafood?cmpid=tpdaily-eml-2016-07-20](http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/07/20/sustainable-summer-seafood?cmpid=tpdaily-eml-2016-07-20) by Jane Lear]

## Tell the EPA: Ban the Use of Toxic Atrazine

A long-awaited scientific assessment from the EPA has now confirmed what many have long suspected: the second most widely-used herbicide in the US, a chemical known as atrazine, has toxic effects on animals and plants, pointing to the strong likelihood of its danger and toxicity to human beings. Atrazine is now known to be one of the most common contaminants in Americans' drinking water.

Produced by chemical giant Syngenta as a weed-killer, 70 million pounds has been sprayed on U.S. cropland for the past 20 years. Half of the corn grown in the U.S. has been sprayed with atrazine. Previous reports have already shown that atrazine can have toxic effects on humans, and the EPA is slated to release its own report on atrazine's effects. Atrazine is already banned in the European Union. With all available evidence showing that atrazine poses a serious risk to human health, we need to begin the call right now for this toxic chemical to be completely banned in the U.S. To sign the petition, go to <http://act.credoaction.com/sign/atrazine?t=4&akid=18841.1547860.lghdz4>.