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February 28, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor  
State of Florida  
PL 05 The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Re: Red tide

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The Florida Council of 100 has recently completed a primer and research review on the important policy issue of red tide and its impacts on our state. As acknowledged by most experts, the dinoflagellate *K. brevis*, a naturally occurring organism that causes red tide, is almost always present in the Gulf of Mexico in low and harmless concentrations. Upwellings of water from the deepest parts of the ocean can bring *K. brevis* to the surface where, combined with the right light, temperature, salinity, and nutrients, a red tide bloom can erupt 10-40 miles offshore. However, red tide blooms are not unusual, occurring 57 out of the last 66 years in Florida, with super blooms occurring about every 10 years.

The toxins from red tide blooms can kill fish, birds, and marine mammals, as well as harming humans' eyes and respiratory systems as far inland as 1-2 miles. Red tide blooms can also hurt commercial fisheries and wash dead, decaying sea life on to beaches, driving away recreation and tourism activity. Unfortunately, no research over the past 8 decades has found an effective way to eliminate red tide blooms that can stretch for 10,000 square miles.

The Florida Council of 100 strongly commends you for assuming the leadership role in efforts to protect Florida's environment, including issuing the executive order, Achieving More Now for Florida's Environment, which calls for the reconstitution of the Red Tide Task Force to address the causes and effects of red tide on the state. Moreover, we sincerely hope that your continued recommendations to fund initiatives to study and combat Florida's red tide blooms will bear fruit.

We also recognize your actions to mitigate the effects of blue-green algae in the state. This is another pressing environmental problem that affects both the health and livelihoods of all Floridians. That said, even though both blue-green algae and red tide can be exacerbated by human-contributed nutrients, it will be increasingly important to educate the

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populace on the differences between the two types of algae in order to develop optimal solutions for addressing both scourges.

Although the problem of red tide has currently subsided, it will inevitably return to Florida's shores. The Florida Council of 100 will continue to track legislation and recommendations as they move forward and stands ready to support your efforts to address the red tide issue.

Sincerely,

**Chris Corr**  
Chair, Florida Council of 100  
Chief Executive Officer  
Radiant Places & Properties

**Bob Ward**  
President & CEO  
Florida Council of 100

cc. Shane Strum  
Diane Moulton  
Chris Spencer