

OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Ralph Hall (R-TX)
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
Harmful Algal Blooms: Challenges on the Nation's Coastlines

July 10, 2008

Thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

I have to admit, we don't get many harmful algal blooms in my district. We are usually more concerned with drought than with excess, stagnant water. Nevertheless, harmful algal blooms have detrimental effects on our coastal communities and these effects can be felt even up in the 4th district with higher prices or limited selections of seafood.

The 105th and the 108th Congresses enacted legislation that directs NOAA to put together a national policy on research of harmful algal blooms and outline potential mitigation strategies. I am happy to know that such plans are now in place and will help coordinate the federal government's efforts on algae research. I hope that they have remembered the Department of Energy's research program on fuel from algae several decades ago, and that this outside-the-box thinking is characteristic of our national strategy on dealing with harmful algal blooms. Sometimes environmental problems can have a silver lining, and I hope that our scientists look for that lining in addition to looking for a cure.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished panelists about what research is currently going on, and what is planned for the future. Thank you again, and I yield back the balance of my time.