

Editorial Opinion

Naples Daily News

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Toxic algae

Steps must be taken before the next crisis

The public uprising we've witnessed in response to toxic algae in our waterways has been heartfelt, infuriating and tragic.

People are beginning to fear not just for the health of our estuaries and beaches, but for the health of their children. And there is, of course, no end in sight. Our water crisis is both a continuation and escalation of problems that have plagued regions of Florida for decades.

This isn't just an environmental calamity; it's also a political crisis. Legislative solutions have been undermined. And some public servants lack urgency. All this must change if our water crisis is ever to be solved.

Since the last large-scale crisis in 2013, editorial boards of Treasure Coast Newspapers and the Naples Daily News, now both part of the USA TODAY NETWORK, have suggested steps to take us in the right direction. Let's revisit them:

1. Get the money right

Amendment 1 money must be spent as voters intended, for land acquisition and restoration. The Legacy Florida Act, passed earlier this year, would secure 25 percent or \$200 million annually — whichever is smallest — of the money generated by Amendment 1. But that's not enough; voters who approved Amendment 1 in 2014 were under the impression the measure would generate more. And more is needed.

2. Buy the land

That money must be used to buy land south of Lake Okeechobee for water storage, treatment and conveyance to the Everglades. Yes, we need to complete projects already in the works. But an independent study by the University of Florida, released last year, concluded that reducing discharges and meeting the Everglades' need for more water "will require between 11,000 and 129,000 acres of additional land" between Lake Okeechobee and Everglades National Park. It's past time to implement that recommendation.

3. Start talks now

Recognizing the need to buy land south of Lake Okeechobee, we must launch immediate talks with stakeholders, including the sugar industry, to shape this long-term fix. The sugar industry owns large tracts in key locations south of the lake, and at one time U.S. Sugar was a willing seller. The company recently agreed to sit down with elected leaders and environmentalists to work on stopping the discharges.

The point is to build consensus, with stakeholders talking to — not past — one another.

4. Rally around a leader

The talks require a point person. The Daily News editorial board had suggested U.S. Rep. Curt Clawson, R-Bonita Springs, but he since decided not to seek re-election, so perhaps it's his successor. This person would be a consensus-builder, not a unilateral decision-maker. He or she would stay the course on sending lake water south.

5. More public health data

As we await a land buy, we need better monitoring of health concerns related to water quality. Right now, doctors have inadequate protocols for testing or reporting waterborne illnesses such as *Vibrio vulnificus*. With questions about the long-term effects of exposure to the blue-green algae plaguing our shores, it should be standard procedure for doctors to report all suspected cases of waterborne illnesses to the Florida Department of Health.

6. Proactive leaders

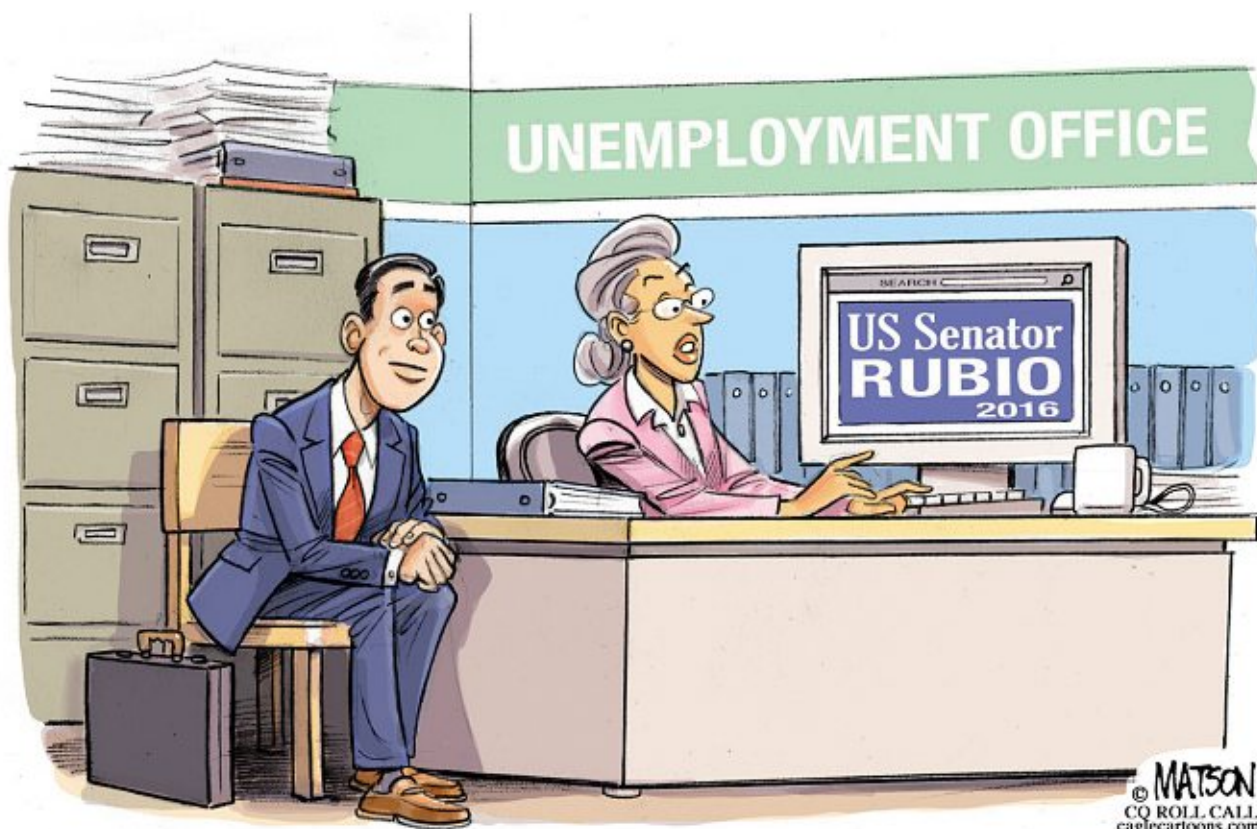
Finally, we need elected officials who share their constituents' sense of urgency.

When politicians who were in office during previous water crises promised change, it didn't arrive. Their promises now ring hollow.

From Congress to the governor to the Legislature and county commissions, we need people who don't merely talk change, but agitate for it.

None of this solves our water crisis tomorrow. The reality is, this summer is already lost. The question is: How many more "lost summers" must we endure before we make the hard choices that might, at long last, make a real difference?

— Treasure Coast Newspapers Editorial Board



"YEP, THAT'S STILL THE ONLY JOB OPENING YOU'RE QUALIFIED FOR..."

LETTERS

Linda Oberhaus, Naples
Executive director,
Shelter for Abused Women & Children

Protecting victims

On June 20, Amparo Moreno was shot and killed by her husband during a domestic assault in the driveway of her Lehigh Acres home. Also killed was Moreno's neighbor, Ricardo Vaca, a newlywed and expectant father, who attempted to come to her aid. The grief endured by their families is unimaginable.

As Americans debate gun laws, it is imperative that we continue to hold abusers accountable and ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence. Last year, guns were used in 47 percent of Florida's domestic fatalities.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the presence of a firearm in domestic-violence situations increases the risk of lethality for victims by 500 percent. It is also common for abusers to use firearms as a tool of terror and control.

For this reason, the shelter applauds the June 27 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Voisine v. United States*. Lawyers hired by convicted domestic abuser Stephen Voisine argued that he had the right to gun ownership because he did not knowingly or intentionally inflict violence on his victim. Justices didn't buy it, and neither do we.

The shelter is committed to protecting victims and survivors from all forms of domestic abuse and we hope you will stand with us to support laws that keep guns out of the hands of convicted abusers.

Lindsey DeRenzis, Naples

Overbuilding

Every month our visitor numbers are down, yet none of the powers that be have acknowledged the real reasons: overbuilding and destruction of our natural resources.

Really, how many extra visitors does the Marco Island resort bring in? Many rentals for this season's "warm winter" were booked last year.

Naples had an exclusive niche in the Florida tourism market. A low-key yet upscale downtown, beautiful uncrowded beaches, lots of green spaces and wildlife.

Our downtown contained small unusual shops. Crayton Cove is funky, you can dine in an elegant restaurant downtown or a Jimmy Buffet-type bar on the waterfront. A trip to the Everglades is minutes away. Now, by giving in to greedy builders, we are homogenizing our town to look like all the others.

We will soon look like Miami and Orlando, but will never be able to compete with them. Let's hold on to and maximize what we have, a beautiful town, with a beautiful environment. We do not need one more Ulta or PetSmart or any more big-box stores. Visitors can go to them

Letter of the Day

Susan Klein, Naples

Confusing numbers

When Collier County counts the "heads" in beds, they should be driving the roads instead.

Stores and restaurants are doing well; I'm sure the bars think things are swell.

The locals do appreciate the revenues, but wait — all we get is more bad news. Don't tell us that the visitor numbers are down. It's obvious that we need gates for our town.

In the season not a parking space can be found, and summer numbers are growing by leaps and bounds.

So please, bean counters, wake up and use more sense. Our towns are full up ... you must be dense.

anywhere in the country.

Naples needs to hold on to what makes it unique from every other town in Florida.

Nick Kalvin, Naples

Batten's right

Islamic extremism isn't deviant terrorism. It's the truest form of Islam, practiced by Muhammad and stated in the Quran (Revelations), Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet), and Sira (biography); i.e., it's fundamental Islam.

The Islamic State group, or ISIS, and the Taliban do exactly what the Quran says: Tolerate no other faiths, political or legal systems. Offer conversion, surrender, submission. If refused, make cruelest holy war (jihad). Inflict pain, terror into hearts. Give no quarter. Slaughter all males with pubic hair, take children and women as slaves, divided as booty along with stolen treasures and goods. One-fifth of booty goes to the faith.

Those who surrender become lesser human beings called dhimmis (treated as Adolf Hitler treated Jews) and are heavily taxed.

An Islamic, Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, inspired Hitler to plan the "final solution" before World War II, and recruited 100,000 European Muslims to help the SS.

Today, only Islam promotes and sanctions slavery, including sexual, most recently by scholars of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, one of whom is female. They add, "Jihad and slavery will be, as long as Islam exists."

Islamic law, Sharia, comes from the Quran. It is incompatible with Western concepts, particularly the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Islam doesn't mean peace. Dar al-Islam is the world of Islam, also called "Ummah," the place free of Western contamination.

Dar al-Harb is the non-Muslim part of the world where jihad is done.

Islam is the most intolerant religion in history. True believers of Islam are outraged when peoples of dar al-Harb defend themselves, or worst of all, retaliate within dar al-Islam.

Muhammad slaughtered writers and poets who disagreed with him, including nursing mothers. Brent Batten was right on in his recent column.

(I am the author of "Sexual Jihad," 2014 and 2015.)

James C. Athanas, Naples
Foreign service officer, retired

Benghazi report

The Benghazi report: emotion, not facts. These are the facts:

Military operates under a status of forces agreement limiting their role in-country.

1. The State Department does not have the authority to "send in the Marines" if the embassy or the consulate comes under attack.

2. The host country is responsible for protecting the embassy and the consulate in all countries.

3. Unless the host country asks the United States for assistance, the U.S. cannot send military to the host country.

4. If the U.S. were to send a military force to intervene in the host country, that would be considered as the United States invading that country.

The last major point I want to make is this: Every person who is now serving, or has ever served, in the U.S. foreign service knows these rules and accepts the risks associated with serving their country in war-torn, dangerous conflict zones.

The foreign service officer takes pride in serving his or her country, being a representative of the United States, interacting with the host government to try to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the country. The work, while dangerous, is extremely important and satisfying.

To try to point fingers at who is at fault for the deaths of these foreign service officers for political gain is abhorrent and disrespectful of those who gave their lives. It would make those who have fallen while serving their country, ashamed and angry. It diminishes their hard work and pride of service.

James A. Forstner, Bonita Springs

Consequences

So 2.5 million of the London urban elites want a revote on Brexit. To them, it seems that they don't believe that "elections have consequences," to quote the current U.S. president.

It seems that the London elites, like Barack Obama, really believe that elections have consequences, unless we do not like them.

Obama uses executive orders and other extra-constitutional actions to counter election results. The U.K. elites could learn subversion from Emir Obama.