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July 14, 2021

The Honorable Richard Spinrad
Administrator
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Administrator Spinrad:

I write to express my concerns with recent reports indicating a rapidly growing jellyfish population off the coast of Rhode Island. With 400 miles of coastline and an ocean tourism industry that supports more than 36,000 jobs, the increased presence of jellyfish on Rhode Island's beaches threatens the health and safety of the state's residents and local economy.

On July 7, 2021, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) notified beachgoers of an abundance of Atlantic Sea Nettle Jellyfish in the state's coastal estuarine ponds. RIDEM warned that stings from this species may cause "discomfort and itchy welts." While RIDEM noted warmer water temperatures may be to blame, the agency acknowledged that "the reason for the increase in Atlantic Sea Nettle Jellyfish this summer is not yet fully understood."

According to NOAA, last month was the fifth-hottest June on record. These increasing temperatures mean more research and monitoring is needed to understand and predict changes in the ocean environment. In light of this recent incident in Rhode Island, and evidence that temperatures will only continue to rise, I believe more research is needed on changes in jellyfish blooms and migration.

By August 13, 2021, I request that you provide my office with information on what, if any, research NOAA is conducting to better understand and monitor changes in jellyfish patterns in Southern New England.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office for assistance. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator