

# CLINTON TO CALL ON CONGRESS TO START ACTION ON ZIKA VIRUS

**WASHINGTON:** Hillary Clinton will call on Congress to return to Washington and pass emergency funding for the Zika response during a visit to a Miami neighborhood dealing with the first US outbreak of the disease. Yesterday afternoon, the Democratic presidential candidate plans to tour the Borinquen Medical Center, a health clinic close to the Wynwood area where 16 non-travel related cases have been diagnosed.

She will demand Republican leaders bring Congress back in session to either pass stalled legislation or craft a new bipartisan compromise bill to provide funding for testing, treat-

ment and research on the disease, according to aides briefed on her plans.

Clinton's running mate, Virginia Sen Tim Kaine, has already said he'd return to Washington for a vote on a Zika bill. Until this month, the only known Zika cases in the United States were in people who had recently traveled to Latin America and the Caribbean. Federal officials last week warned pregnant women to avoid the Miami neighborhood and a 1-square-mile area around it.

### Spreading disease

Public health experts worry about the dis-

ease spreading: Florida health officials said on Monday they're investigating a case of Zika virus infection in Palm Beach County that was likely contracted in the United States. Lawmakers left Washington in mid-July for a seven-week recess without approving any of the \$1.9 billion that President Barack Obama requested in February to develop a vaccine and control the mosquitoes that carry the virus.

Both sides have been pointing fingers since. Obama, Clinton and Democrats blame Republicans for politicizing the legislation by adding a provision to a \$1.1 billion take-it-or-

leave-it measure that would have blocked Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico from receiving money. Republicans say the administration has not spent money that has already been provided and is trying to play politics in an election year.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky, has signaled he is in no rush to return. Writing in the Lexington (Ky) Herald-Leader last week, he criticized Democrats for balking at passing the bill. He said they'll get another chance after Labor Day when Congress is back in session. Clinton supported the bill, which her policy aide Ann O'Leary called "a

critical first step to protect public health and ultimately save lives" in a post on the website Medium.

She laid out a plan to combat the virus last March, which included allocating \$1.8 billion in emergency funds.

A month later, she dispatched two of her aides to Puerto Rico, where hundreds of cases have been detected, to meet with medical professionals. "Zika is real. It's dangerous. And if we're serious about stopping this epidemic in its tracks, then there's no time to waste," Clinton wrote in a June op-ed in the Sun Sentinel. — AP

## STUDY LINKS GLOBAL WARMING TO RISE IN WATERBORNE ILLNESSES

**WASHINGTON:** Rising global temperatures are clearly linked to increasing waterborne food poisoning, particularly from eating raw oysters, along with other nasty infections, a new study shows. About a dozen species of vibrio (VIB'-ree-oh) bacteria make people sick from eating raw or undercooked seafood or drinking or swimming in tainted water. It also causes cholera, although that was not the focus of the research.

Lab-confirmed vibrio infections in the United States have increased from an average of about 390 a year from the late 1990s to an average of 1,030 in recent years, according to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention. But most cases aren't confirmed by tests and reported. "It's a remarkable increase on an annual basis," said study lead author Rita Colwell of the University of Maryland, a top microbiologist who used to head the National Science Foundation. The study examined Europe and North America, but the most consistent tracking of vibrio illnesses were in the United States. The CDC blames about 100 deaths a year on vibrio on average.

Even Alaska, where such outbreaks used to be unheard of because the bacteria needs warm water, is getting cases from people eating vibrio-infected oysters, Colwell said. — AP

## RESEARCHERS ASKING FOR OLD PHOTOS OF LAKE TAHOE ALGAE

**INCLINE VILLAGE:** With all their modern scientific equipment and state-of-the-art computer models, researchers trying to better understand the effect of algae growth in Lake Tahoe are searching for new tools to aid in their mission - old photo albums. Experts at the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center said in an annual report last week that the mountain lake is still getting warmer, regional winters are still getting shorter and snowfall is still on the decline. Water quality also has worsened a bit. What is less clear, however, is the trend in long-term algae growth.

"Everyone wants to know if there's more of this stuff, but we don't know," said Geoff Schladow, a professor of water resources and environmental engineering at UC Davis. Researchers study algae growth because it is linked to high levels of nutrients, which enter the lake both atmospherically and through stormwater runoff. Fertilizer, for example, contains nutrients and can find its way into the lake when it rains, thus contributing to algae growth.

"We have low rainfall and low sediments coming in. You would expect the clarity to be better," Schladow said last week during a presentation on the campus of Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village, according to the Sierra Sun.

But despite a reduction in the amount of sediment entering the lake last year because of the ongoing drought in the West, the concentration of nitrate is actually higher. The problem is, scientists have already been measuring algae growth at Tahoe since the 2000s. "What we're left to use is anecdotal data," Schladow said. "We also ask for old photos, so if anyone has some they'd like to share, unfortunately that is the only older data we have." Scott Hackley, a staff research associate at UC Davis, said he's worked with archivists at the University of Nevada, Reno, to find old photos, but he and his team are hopeful that the community can help as well. "It'd be nice to get some old photos with the year, time of year and the location. to fill in some of the historical gaps," he said. — AP



NEVADA: This file photo taken on August 13, 2015 shows a Perseid meteor streak across the sky above desert pine trees in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. — AFP

## GREAT BALLS OF FIRE FROM THE SKY: PREPARE FOR A METEOR 'OUTBURST'

SKY-GAZERS ARE IN FOR A SPECIAL TREAT

**PARIS:** Northern hemisphere sky-gazers are in for a special treat tomorrow night with a rare shooting star "outburst", which astronomers hope will not be marred by clouds and a bright Moon. For about an hour around 2300 GMT, there will be more than double the usual fireball activity associated with the annual Perseid meteor shower.

"There will be 200 or maybe as many as 300 (shooting stars) per hour," observed from a very dark site, astronomer Mark Bailey of the Armagh Observatory in Northern Ireland told AFP. "This outburst, as we call it... doesn't last that long. It might last an hour or a couple of hours," he said. Normally, the Perseids regale Earthlings with a show of about 100-120 shooting stars per hour. The event builds up over about two weeks, peaking in mid-August.

"Some years are better than others... and then there are exceptional years like this year," Bailey said. The Perseids happen when Earth hits a wide belt of debris left behind by the comet Tuttle-Swift on its elongated, 133-year orbit around the Sun. Each meteor is a piece of bro-

ken-off comet, which explodes as it hits Earth's atmosphere. Within the broad belt of debris there are also denser dust ribbons created when the comet passes closest to the Sun in its orbit-a juncture called perihelion. This year, Earth is on a collision course with three of the most heavily populated of these trails-created in the years 1862, 1737 and 1479.

### 'Kamikaze run'

"The meteors you'll see this year are from comet flybys that occurred hundreds if not thousands of years ago," NASA meteoroid expert Bill Cooke said in a statement. "And they've travelled billions of miles before their kamikaze run into Earth's atmosphere." However, there is no risk to our planet. In fact, astronomers' main concern is the weather, with cloud cover predicted for parts of Europe.

There is also the dimming impact of our own satellite-the Moon-which will be in a bright phase, making it harder to observe the sharp but short-lived bursts of meteors exploding. "It is unfortunate that it is in a waxing phase," said Bailey. "So we should really be observing after

moonset"-some 30 minutes into the outburst. He advised people to get as far away from clouds and electric light as possible in order to enjoy the show. No telescope or special equipment is needed. "Wrap up warm, be prepared to sit comfortably on a deck chair or whatever, a glass of wine in your hand maybe, and then allow time for your eyes to become accustomed to the dark," which can take as long as 20 minutes, Bailey said.

The next mega-outburst of the Perseids is predicted to occur on August 12, 2028, and will feature the dust trail produced by the comet during its 1479 perihelion passage. The yearly show got its name because the stars appear to fly out of the constellation Perseus, visible in the Northern Hemisphere. It is also known as "tears of St Lawrence" in honor of a Christian saint tortured to death by the Romans in AD 258. According to legend, Laurentius was martyred on an iron grill over a fire, during which ordeal he is said to have quipped to his persecutors: "Turn me over. I'm done on this side!" He is a patron saint of cooks. — AFP



NEVADA: In this Aug 24, 2015 file photo, a kayaker paddles along Zephyr Cove, the sight of the 19th Annual Lake Tahoe Summit in south Lake Tahoe. — AP

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