

HelmholtzZentrum münchen

German Research Center for Environmental Health

- Biochemical Plant Pathology



- Biochemistry

PD Dr. Anton Schäffner

Institute of Biochemical Plant Pathology
Ingolstädter Landstr. 1
85764 Neuherberg
Germany

Phone +49 (0)89 3187 2930

Fax +49 (0)89 3187 2726

Email schaeffner@helmholtz-muenchen.de

To

Kobytkin Dmitry Nikolaevich

Minister of Ecology

Ministry of Nat Resources and Ecology of Russia

Fax +7-4992544310

München, April 4, 2019

Dear Minister of Ecology Mr. Nikolaevich:

colleagues at the Limnological Institute Irkutsk informed me that the water quality of the great Lake Baikal is worsening in recent years. I am biochemist and geneticist at the *Helmholtz Zentrum München*, a large research center of the German Helmholtz Association. I think that intense attempts should be made to sustainably preserve this unique freshwater lake on our planet for the people living there, but also for visitors of this world heritage.

I myself was very lucky to visit and work at the shore of Lake Baikal in the late 1980s in the frame of a collaborative project of scientist there and my home institute at the *Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany* during my doctorate. This visit was one of the most impressive experiences in my live. In particular, I remember that we could just go and take high quality drinking water from the lake. The contacts continued at least sporadically. Just recently, I collaborated with colleagues in Irkutsk now from my own laboratory and we published a joint scientific paper in 2015 (Permyakov et al., *Eur. J. Phycol.* 51, 99-106).

Now, I learn from my colleagues that on the one hand there is a great success in increasing tourism to Lake Baikal. This is definitely nice and very important for the region. However, currently these activities also strongly contribute to the contamination of the water and in particular nearshore eutrophication, since sewage treatment is missing or suboptimal at new hotels, but also at existing settlements. Therefore, I urge you to support any measures to establish a better waste water management. This will ensure that not only this unique freshwater resource is preserved for mankind, but it will also attract tourists in the future. Tourists will not want to have their vacation at the shore of a eutrophied lake.

Lake Baikal is in the first place a Russian heritage, but due to its magnitude and importance it is also a heritage of mankind. Therefore, I am sure that international financial support including intergovernmental organizations like the United Nations will help in this endeavor.

Yours sincerely,

(Anton Schäffner)