



Press Advisory

March 22, 2018

OEPA RELENTS AND LISTS LAKE ERIE "IMPAIRED"

Today, the Ohio EPA announced its decision to list the open waters of western Lake Erie as impaired in the draft "Integrated Report" it sends to the USEPA.

The Integrated Report is where state agencies list water bodies as impaired and is produced biannually in even-numbered years. Sandy Bihn can tell you how many years she has requested the OEPA to include western Lake Erie in that report, with no success. Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie filed a lawsuit in Federal Court last July to compel the USEPA to designate the lake impaired. Judge James Carr heard oral arguments on the case on March 6 and a decision has been expected for over a week.

ACLE has also inundated Gov. Kasich's office with hundreds of postcards, picketed at OEPA-sponsored events and worked hard to raise awareness of the issue. (See attached).

Mike Ferner, coordinator of ACLE said of the OEPA move, "This decision that took massive public insistence and a federal court suit is way overdue, but let's get down to work now. An impaired designation kicks off a process under the Clean Water Act that includes finding out exactly who the polluters are and the amounts from each. It must be completely transparent, with public involvement every step of the way. ACLE will be vigilant to see that this declaration actually means something."

"The OEPA's news release stated that it requested input from a number of universities and federal agencies because 'to date, no such (science-based) process has existed' to determine what exactly 'impaired' means. We find that difficult to believe because Michigan declared its portion of Lake Erie impaired and thousands of bodies of water around the nation have been so designated, including Chesapeake Bay, which is eight times larger than ours."

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