

## **Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie**

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### **NEW GROUP FORMED TO CLEAN UP LAKE ERIE**

#### **SAYS SUPREME COURT'S FARM BUREAU DECISION IS "PERFECT TIMING"**

**TOLEDO --** Earlier this week, 40 people met at the Sanger Branch Library to convene a new citizens' group to fight for the health of Lake Erie.

"We chose the name 'Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie' (ACLE) because that's exactly what we're going to do," said former city councilman, Mike Ferner. "Western Lake Erie has been quietly poisoned for too many years until it's become very sick and a public health crisis every summer."

Referring to this week's Supreme Court decision to [refuse an American Farm Bureau appeal](#) to stop the Chesapeake Bay cleanup and similar EPA actions under its "impaired watershed" designation, Ferner said, "The Court's decision is a big, big victory for Chesapeake Bay and perfect timing for our efforts here."

"The Farm Bureau claimed the US EPA did not have authority under the Clean Water Act to require polluters to clean up their act. But the Court refused to hear the Farm Bureau's appeal, thereby upholding the EPA's authority in other impaired watershed cleanups, like the one we need for Lake Erie."

The long-time environmentalist added, "It's time the Farm Bureau was unmasked as the face of Old MacDonald's Farm. It's a powerful lobby that promotes industrial farming to the detriment of local communities and in our case, the source of our drinking water. The American Farm Bureau tried to gut the national Clean Water Act and the Ohio Farm Bureau has corrupted state agencies charged with protecting our air and water."

"Governor Kasich's policy chief for Lake Erie, [Karl Gebhardt](#), is a former 19-year lobbyist for the Ohio Farm Bureau. The governor, the Ohio Farm Bureau and the Ohio EPA are all against an impaired watershed designation for Lake Erie. Their goal is not the protection of our environment and health, it's to enrich an elite group that profits from industrialized agriculture while we bear the costs."

"When powerful interests hold government hostage in order to use Lake Erie as a sewer and poison our water, the antidote is to use the power of democracy to create the kind of lake and the kind of life we deserve," Ferner concluded.

[Over 140 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations](#) (CAFOs) are licensed to operate in the Maumee River watershed in NW Ohio, SE Michigan and NE Indiana. Just those factories, not counting the slightly smaller, unlicensed operations, dump 700,000,000 gallons of untreated animal waste on farmland annually, equivalent to more than the combined sewage of Los Angeles and Chicago. The OFB has taken some steps to help reduce commercial fertilizer runoff from row crops, but it supports CAFOs which are a much bigger problem.

ACLE plans a series of public programs this spring to educate the public about the toxic algae problems in Lake Erie and how CAFOs contribute to it, along with other sources such as sewage treatment plants, septic tanks, lawn and golf course fertilizing and storm runoff. ACLE's first public program will be March 29, 7:00pm, at the Walbridge Park shelterhouse, featuring Pam Taylor, a CAFO expert and member of [Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Southeast and Central Michigan](#).

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