

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



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ADVOCATES RESPOND TO MAYOR'S FACEBOOK TOWNHALL REMARKS

TOLEDO – After watching last evening's presentation by Mayor Hicks-Hudson and two City administrators, Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie issued the following statement.

We will respond to seven specific items, but first an overall comment on the Mayor's approach is needed.

Frequently, the Mayor repeated the word "partnering," as in: We are partnering with many organizations. We are working actively with our partners. We are working with our urban and rural partners.

We must state this simply and bluntly: The citizens who rely on Lake Erie's water and the utility ratepayers who fund the system do not want or need a 'partner' singing Kumbayah with the powerful interests like the factory farm operators who profit by using our lake as their toilet.

The citizens, the lake and every creature depending on it need a fighter. A fighter who will challenge the factory farm operators, the Dairy Council, [National Corn Growers' Assoc.](#), the [National Chicken Council](#), corporate enterprises financed by factory farms like the [North American Manure Expo](#), the [Farm Bureau](#) and its [agents in government](#) who maintain Big Ag's control of environmental policies. That control allows factory farms to dump the equivalent of the sewage from Chicago and Los Angeles, untreated, onto fields above Lake Erie every year.

The Mayor's intent on partnering with the destroyers of Lake Erie has prevented her from realizing we are in the Third Battle for Lake Erie. The first was in 1812. The second was in the 1970's when environmentalists resuscitated a lake dying from sewage and industrial poisoning. The third is today's struggle to save it from being poisoned with hundreds of millions of gallons of manure.

For two years, the Mayor's inability or refusal to understand the fundamentals of this issue, together with her apparent interest in replacing the function of the U.S. EPA in Western Lake Erie's 8,000 sq. mi. watershed, have stifled the political momentum needed to mobilize public resources and require polluters be held accountable for the lake's condition.

Specific responses to yesterday's statements:

We are doing everything in our power to protect the lake.

- Exactly what does that mean beyond spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the water treatment plant? That is really the only thing that has changed since 2014 and it is not a valid solution to the problem.

We are compiling a list of the sources and amounts of pollution

- The “Nutrient Source Inventory” being compiled by the Lucas County Sustainability Commission uses water sampling information that is up to 15 years old. There is no system in place to insure that samples taken at some to-be-determined time will be located to document what hundreds of factory farms are contributing to the pollution flowing into the lake.
- There are no plans and no foreseeable resources adequate to conduct the stream sampling program necessary to determine who is responsible for how much pollution generated throughout the watershed without federal involvement.

We are working with our international partners to achieve a 40% reduction in Phosphorus

- The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement the Mayor referred to is a completely voluntary measure with no enforceable requirements on anyone.

The Ohio EPA is a main source of advice for Toledo’s efforts

- The Deputy Director of the Ohio EPA, in charge of Lake Erie policy is Karl Gebhardt, an Ohio Farm Bureau lobbyist for 19 years in between stints in state government. His unfounded, inflammatory estimate that a USEPA “impaired” designation would cost Toledo one billion dollars to rebuild the sewage treatment plant is used by City officials to oppose supporting that designation, even though the Lucas County Commissioners supported it unanimously and testified so at a City public hearing.

The City spent \$93,000 for Chlorine at the water treatment plant in 2013 and \$122,000 is budgeted for this year.

- This is in response to one of the questions submitted by ACLE. It represents an annual increase of 7.8% which means that in less than 10 years chlorinating Toledo’s water will more than double! Chlorination generates cancer-causing Trihalomethane compounds. To reduce them, the City is installing ozone treatment at an additional cost of at least \$40,000,000 – further proof that we need to address the source of pollution, not just clean up contaminated water.

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