

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie

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LAKE ADVOCATES SUE U.S. EPA IN FEDERAL COURT

“MORE CHLORINE IS NOT AN ANSWER. WE MUST HOLD POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE.”

TOLEDO – The environmental group, Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie (ACLE) filed a suit here today in U.S. District Court, to compel the U.S. EPA to designate the entire Western Basin of Lake Erie “impaired.” The agency ruled in May to accept the Ohio EPA’s designation of some areas near the shoreline and the City of Toledo’s water intake as impaired. ACLE is represented by its co-plaintiff, the Environmental Law and Policy Center, a Midwest public interest firm in Chicago. ([Click here](#) for the complaint)

“The lake isn’t ‘sort of’ impaired in a couple places, it’s impaired throughout the western basin,” said Mike Ferner, ACLE coordinator. Public officials need to get their heads out of the sand and acknowledge it will take mandatory steps to get Lake Erie back to health. Toledo has to spend tens of millions of dollars on chemicals and new facilities to decontaminate our drinking water after hundreds of factory farms in the watershed use it as their toilet.”

ACLE has pointed to the “[Follow the Manure](#)” report published by the Less = More Coalition and the Michigan Sierra Club that says some 700,000,000 gallons of urine, feces and bacteria such as e. coli are spread, untreated, on the western basin’s watershed every year, an amount equal to the sewage output of Los Angeles and Chicago combined. “And that’s just from some 150 factory farms large enough to have to register with the EPA. There are hundreds more just under that size. More chlorine in our drinking water is not an acceptable answer. We need to go after the polluters responsible for poisoning the lake.”

ACLE pointed out that the OEPA’s Deputy Director and head of the Lake Erie Commission, [Karl Gebhardt](#), lobbied for 19 years for the Ohio Farm Bureau before going to the state agency and that the Farm Bureau and related companies that make up the factory farm industry have corrupted the state’s environmental policies to favor CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations).

“Our members used to fish and swim regularly in Lake Erie and now nobody with any sense goes in the water most of the summer. Toledo even announced the beginning of a ‘Harmful Algal Bloom Season’ this year! This is insane and we won’t start taking it for normal. As one of our members said, ‘We want water that is safe and clean, not just legally drinkable,’” Ferner concluded.

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