

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



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LAKE ADVOCATES TO TOLEDO OFFICIALS: “WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?”
Michigan decision declaring Erie impaired demands action from Toledo

TOLEDO – In a strongly-worded letter to Toledo’s Mayor and City Council, Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie (ACLE) today demanded Toledo officials support an “impaired” designation for Lake Erie, following yesterday’s decision by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to do so in its part of the lake.

“It’s time you answered the old labor union question: ‘Which side are you on?’” the group’s letter began.

“The State of Michigan, reeling from the disaster in Flint, decided it must do better by Lake Erie and did so by declaring its portion of the lake ‘impaired’ yesterday. The people you work for want to know if you are waiting for another poisoned water crisis in Toledo before telling Ohio’s EPA to do the same,” the letter continued.

ACLE said it believes this is another opportunity for Toledo to join the Lucas County Commissioners and the City of Oregon and support an impaired designation for all the Ohio waters of Western Lake Erie.

An impaired designation would require a complete pollution inventory and an enforceable action plan to hold polluters accountable, while [providing significant federal dollars](#) as the Chesapeake Bay cleanup has proven.

But an enforceable action plan to clean up Lake Erie “is something Big Ag interests like the Ohio Farm Bureau and operators of hundreds of milk and meat factory ‘farms’ don’t want. Those profiting from poisoning our lake oppose doing their part to stem the [hundreds of millions of gallons](#) of animal waste dumped every year, untreated, on fields draining into Lake Erie. Toledoans have paid hundreds of millions of dollars to reduce our pollution sources. It’s time Big Ag did the same,” the letter added.

The environmental group pointed to the hundreds of millions of gallons of animal waste factory farms annually dump on fields draining into Lake Erie, the impact it has on Toledo’s source of drinking water and the unhealthy influence the Farm Bureau and its allies have on state government.

“The Deputy Director of the Ohio EPA in charge of Lake Erie policy, Karl Gebhardt, was not only an Ohio Farm Bureau lobbyist for 19 years, but also a registered lobbyist for Vreba Hoff Dairies, the first CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation) owners in NW Ohio. Again we ask our public officials, which side are you on?”

The next ACLE meeting is this Wednesday, 6:30pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 4441 Monroe St., Toledo.

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