

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



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LAKE ADVOCATES: AG DIRECTOR DANIELS FIRING “PART OF KASICH’S STRATEGY TO AVOID THE CLEAN WATER ACT, LOOK TOUGH ON POLLUTERS AND MASSAGE HIS RESUME FOR 2020”

Toledo – [Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie](#) today issued the following statement from coordinator Mike Ferner on Governor Kasich’s firing of David Daniels, Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA).

“Governor Kasich [reportedly fired ODA Director Daniels](#) for not fast-tracking his ‘[distressed watershed](#)’ executive order. But it’s much more likely part of the governor’s scheme to look tough on factory farm operators while shielding them from the real accountability called for in the federal Clean Water Act. Not coincidentally, it can also position him as a champion of Lake Erie for the 2020 presidential election if he decides to run.

When Kasich signed his executive order on July 11 declaring portions of the western Lake Erie watershed ‘distressed,’ he did so to avoid having Ohio’s EPA implement the U.S. Clean Water Act under an impaired designation. That would require a complete pollution inventory to establish who is polluting and how much, followed by legally-enforceable timetables and pollution limits. Instead, he chose a distressed program administered by the ODA that specifically exempts confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

Kasich’s [remarks at the signing ceremony](#) (Briefly mentioned at 24:00. Much more pointed references to “extremists” in agriculture and environmentalists were made in the live broadcast but eliminated in this archived version.) clearly indicated his strategy was to set up a classic ‘straw man’ scenario in which he invents opponents to a toothless policy and then knocks them down, thereby appearing to be ‘tough on pollution.’ Director Daniels was the first high-profile victim of that strategy and there will likely be others as the Governor massages his resume for another presidential run.

The loser in all this is not Daniels, but Lake Erie. In order to protect CAFO operators who dump the equivalent of Chicago and L.A.’s waste, untreated, on fields draining into the lake, Kasich refuses to abide by the Clean Water Act which has worked successfully for [Chesapeake Bay](#) and opted for the distressed watershed scheme which has been used but once in Ohio – in the monumental [failure to clean up Grand Lake St. Mary’s](#).”

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