

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



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Contact: Mike Ferner 419-729-7273

LAKE ADVOCATES SOUND ALARM ON \$36M “CLEAN LAKE 2020”

“Misnamed legislation will take Ohio taxpayers to the cleaners instead of getting a cleaner lake.”

Toledo – “Ohio HB 643 will take taxpayers to the cleaners instead of getting a cleaner lake,” said a Toledo environmental group prior to hearing and possible vote on the measure [Tuesday](#) in the House Finance Committee. Dubbed “[Clean Lake 2020](#),” the bill has already passed the Ohio Senate.

[Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie](#) (ACLE), the group that successfully sued the USEPA in Federal Court with the [Environmental Law and Policy Center](#) to end an [eight-year delay](#) in declaring western Lake Erie impaired, charged the bill is “another \$36 million for things we know don’t work.”

ACLE coordinator, Mike Ferner, warned that “politicians are rushing to spend the lion’s share of \$36,000,000 this year and proposing a billion more, to be able to say they’re ‘doing something’ for Lake Erie. What’s worse is Governor Kasich and a [corrupt](#) Ohio EPA will use this legislation to avoid a real cleanup under the provisions of the Clean Water Act – all in their ongoing effort to shield real polluters from accountability.”

The “real polluters” identified by ACLE are the huge factory “farms” or Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) that produce more feces and urine than the combined sewage output of Chicago and Los Angeles. The waste is dumped, with no treatment whatsoever, on fields that drain into western Lake Erie.

“The majority of this funding will go for more of the voluntary ‘best management practices’ that are a [proven failure](#) when it comes to keeping dissolved phosphorus out of the lake,” Ferner added. “Buffer or filter strips, no-till ground preparation and liquid manure injection have been shown to do nothing to reduce excess nutrients and in some cases actually make it worse, yet this bill would spend millions more on the same things.”

“Instead of wasting money on practices that are part of the problem, we should fund what the Clean Water Act (CWA) already calls for: a pollution inventory to determine sources and amounts, developing a TMDL (total maximum daily load) to set limits for pollution and a watershed management plan. All [this is being done right](#) now in Chesapeake Bay, just last week shown to be the [healthiest in 33 years](#). [We know CWA works](#) and it provides real accountability – something the CAFO operators want to avoid like the plague,” Ferner added.

ACLE pointed to two official Ohio reports to prove that these widely-used methods are not a good investment:

- Ohio EPA’s “[Nutrient Mass Balance Study](#)” that stated the amount of phosphorus dumped into Lake Erie by the Maumee River increased from 2,200 metric tons in 2013 to 3,000 metric tons in 2017 and
- OSU’s [Ohio Sea Grant](#) data that showed since 1974, the amount of dissolved phosphorus in Lake Erie declined for 20 years, but since CAFOs were introduced in the mid-‘90s it has returned to 1974 levels when wastewater plants were still dumping raw sewage and phosphorus was still in detergents.

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