

**News From:**  
**Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie**



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Contact: Mike Ferner 419-729-7273

**LAKE ADVOCATES QUESTION DEFICIENCIES IN OHIO DEPT. OF AG RULEMAKING FOR**  
**DISTRESSED WATERSHEDS**  
**Calls Grand Lake St. Mary's "Distressed" Program an "Unmitigated Failure"**

In a letter sent today to officials in the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), [Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie](#) (ACLE) questioned several deficiencies in rules for the state's "distressed watershed" program that Governor Kasich has ordered applied to portions of the western Lake Erie watershed.

"It's important to note," said Mike Ferner, ACLE coordinator, "that Ohio's distressed watershed program is totally inadequate to address the toxic algae problems of Lake Erie. [The distressed program](#) has been used only once before in Ohio, at [Grand Lake St. Mary's](#), where it has been in effect for eight years and is an [unmitigated failure](#)."

ACLE's letter to the ODA submitted the following questions and asked for assurance that the group will receive an answer.

- 1) *Why do these new distressed rules NOT apply to Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)?*
- 2) *Why do the rules not include a provision for edge-of-field and end-of-tile water sampling to see if conservation practices have the desired results to a) reduce excess nutrients to an acceptable level and b) indicate that funds spent are providing a benefit?*
- 3) *What recommendations will be made to the General Assembly to provide funding to increase staffing levels to do the needed water testing and provide adequate enforcement?*
- 4) *What will be the penalties for non-compliance?*
- 5) *What objective standards will be used to determine if a watershed is removed from the "distressed" list?*

The deadline for submitting comments is at the close of business today.

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