

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



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SURVEY TO STATE CANDIDATES ASKS “WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT SEWAGE OF CLEVELAND, COLUMBUS, CINCINNATI AND 5 TOLEDOS BEING DUMPED IN NW OHIO?”

TOLEDO – Every candidate running for the Ohio legislature received a survey in the mail today asking what they plan to do about the hundreds of millions of gallons of animal manure being dumped on the farm fields of Northwest Ohio.

Prepared by Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie (ACLE), a Toledo-area environmental group, the cover letter asked the candidates how they plan to bring Lake Erie back to health when

“...an amount of animal manure comparable to the sewage output of Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and five Toledos is spread untreated, every year, on farm fields of Northwest Ohio draining into Lake Erie”

The survey questions pointed out Ohio laws or regulations that allow just 57 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in Ohio’s portion of the Western Lake Erie Basin to “confine over 13 million animals that generate more than 430 million gallons of feces, urine and pathogens (like e. coli) every year.”

Candidates for Ohio House and Senate seats were then asked if they supported reforms such as a temporary moratorium on permits, changes to how much manure can be applied and if CAFO operators should be exempt from regulations by transferring manure to third-party “brokers.”

The survey concluded by asking if candidates would join with Lucas County Commissioners and over a dozen environmental groups to have the U.S. EPA declare the western basin of Lake Erie “impaired,” which would mandate a complete pollution inventory, set Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) on how much pollution would be allowed and establish enforceable timelines.

Susan Matz, ACLE Coordinator, said, “The Ohio Department of Agriculture now estimates 85% of the excess Phosphorus sickening Lake Erie comes from agriculture. We believe CAFOs are the biggest part of that and we want to know what our incumbents and candidates for the Ohio Legislature plan to do about it.”

Candidates were asked to return their responses by October 10, after which ACLE will make them public.

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(CAFO and manure statistics from Michigan Sierra Club’s “Follow the Manure” report and OH Dept. of Agriculture. Cover letter and survey questions are attached)