

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



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ACLE RESPONSE TO CITY COUNCIL PASSING “IMPAIRED” RESOLUTION

Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie (ACLE) congratulates City Council for passing this resolution.

We would like to respond with a stereotypical “better late than never,” but we just cannot. Toledoans cannot overlook the fact that our city’s leaders missed a golden opportunity by refusing to act two years ago during the Obama administration.

At last night’s council hearing, ACLE members made essentially the same arguments we made at a similar hearing in January, 2016 and many times since then.

1/27/16: www.toledoblade.com/Politics/2016/01/27/Designation-of-Erie-watershed-stalls-in-council.html

4/26/16: <http://www.wtol.com/story/31824556/toledo-council-to-hold-expert-panel-on-lake-erie-problem>

5/16/16: <http://www.presspublications.com/18048-lake-advocacy-group-continues-pressure-on-city>

5/23/16: <http://www.toledoblade.com/Politics/2016/05/23/Officials-activists-debate-effects-of-impairment-status.html>

11/11/16: <http://www.wtol.com/story/33691902/group-wants-city-to-take-a-stand-for-lake-erie-cleanup>

11/12/16: <http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2016/11/12/Group-seeks-backing-for-designation-of-all-of-Lake-Erie-as-impaired.html>

11/14/16: <http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2016/11/14/Environmental-activists-pressure-Toledo-City-Council-on-Lake-Erie-status.html>

That said, ACLE welcomes the City’s active advocacy in the future.

When western Lake Erie gets “impaired” status and we believe it will, the real work begins. We need City officials to thoroughly understand what happens next and forcefully advocate for Toledoans and for the lake. Entrenched, well-funded agricultural lobbies will be representing factory farms largely responsible for the lake’s condition. The public interest needs strong representation or we will be left with whatever terms Big Ag dictates.

City officials can take the following steps to begin advocating for us and the lake:

- Decide to become an advocate for the public interest and an active steward for Lake Erie, not just an observer of what will take place
- Contact municipalities throughout the entire watershed – Ohio, Michigan and Indiana – and urge them to pass similar resolutions supporting an impaired designation

- Have Toledo join the Federal Court suit filed by the Environmental Law and Policy Center and ACLE as a Friend of the Court, to have the court compel the U.S. EPA to make an impaired ruling
- Seriously listen to citizen activists who know this issue well and want to be involved, before hiring high-priced consultants who may or may not have the City's best interest at heart
- Create ways for citizens to help guide the process, not just observe it
- Learn what the Chesapeake Bay experience can teach us so it won't take 30 years to start cleaning up Lake Erie

The City of Toledo has a critically important part to play in cleaning up our lake, protecting our drinking water and the health of its citizens. The time for hesitation and wavering is over. It is time for hard work, advocacy and leadership.

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