

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie

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ARE OHIO'S U.S. SENATE CANDIDATES SERIOUS ABOUT LAKE ERIE?

TOLEDO – An environmental group pushing for the cleanup of Lake Erie, is waiting for an answer to a one-question survey it sent to incumbent U.S. Senator Rob Portman and former Ohio Governor Ted Strickland.

“In 2014, the [shutdown of Toledo's water intake](#) and yearly toxic algal blooms on Lake Erie have given Ohio a [national black eye](#),” said Mike Ferner, a former Toledo City Councilman and a coordinator of Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie (ACLE). “Mr. Strickland has received the endorsement of a [prominent environmental group](#) and every week Mr. Portman sends us flyers touting his concern for the lake. So we sent them just one question to see if they’re serious or simply blowing hot air for the campaign.”

Will you join the Lucas Co. Commissioners, the City of Oregon and environmental groups in telling the U.S. EPA to declare the Western Lake Erie Basin impaired?

“An EPA ‘impaired’ designation is the single most effective action to make Lake Erie healthy again, Ferner said. “We want Lake Erie put on a par with [Chesapeake Bay](#) for the federal government’s attention.”

ACLE claims that the states in Lake Erie’s western watershed, Ohio, Michigan and Indiana, have shown they are under the influence of corporate agriculture interests and will not do what’s needed.

“Just as one example, the current Deputy Director of the Ohio EPA in charge of policy for Lake Erie, [Karl Gebhardt](#), was a lobbyist for 19 years for the Ohio Farm Bureau. And it’s not much different in Michigan or Indiana,” Ferner said.

An [exhaustive study published last fall](#), plus recent information from the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture, lists 147 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in the Western Lake Erie Basin are licensed to hold over 13 million animals that excrete some 700 million gallons of manure annually.

“That’s equivalent to the combined sewage of Chicago and Los Angeles!” Ferner exclaimed. “It’s dumped every year, untreated, on fields draining into Lake Erie. And we wonder why excess Phosphorus is ruining our lake with toxic algal blooms every summer?”

Getting an EPA impaired designation for the lake would mean, as for Chesapeake Bay,

- a mandatory inventory of all pollution sources and amounts – from sewage treatment plants to agricultural sources including CAFOs;

- enforceable [Total Maximum Daily Loads](#) (TMDLs) that all polluters must abide by
- mandatory deadlines and report cards
- federal funds to assist with restoration measures.

“Saying, ‘I’m for clean water,’ doesn’t cut it anymore,” Ferner concluded. We want to know where these guys stand.”

ACLE plans to publish the results of the survey before the November election.

The Portman-Strickland race has received \$48 million in outside spending, the [second highest](#) amount of any congressional race in 2016.

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