

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



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**“CLEAN LAKE 2020” JUST TOOK OHIO TAXPAYERS TO THE CLEANERS**  
**Legislators claim to fix Lake Erie, but blow lion’s share of \$36,000,000 on failed measures**

**Toledo** – [Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie](#) (ACLE), the group that successfully sued the USEPA in Federal Court to end an [eight-year delay](#) in declaring western Lake Erie impaired, said yesterday’s passage of the \$36,000,000 “[Clean Lake 2020](#)” was “A very expensive fraud on taxpayers so legislators can say they did something for Lake Erie. The Farm Bureau and its agents like Sen. Randy Gardner and Rep. Steve Arndt who sponsored the legislation have pulled off another fast one.”

ACLE coordinator, Mike Ferner, said, “Two-thirds of the misnamed ‘Clean Lake 2020’s’ \$36,000,000 is going to so-called ‘best management practices’ that have an [uninterrupted track record of failure](#) for dealing with the excess nutrients that cause the lake to go toxic every summer. And what’s worse is Governor Kasich and his [Ohio EPA](#) will use this legislation to keep avoiding a real cleanup with real accountability for polluters, under the provisions of the Clean Water Act.”

ACLE pointed out that 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. Practices such as 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 spends millions more on the same things, “while shielding polluters from accountability yet again,” Ferner added.

Dissolved Phosphorus, the main cause of toxic algal blooms, is not stopped by buffer strips and other measures originally designed to fight soil erosion and excess nitrates. “Most of the dissolved Phosphorus goes straight into underground drain tiles lacing Ohio fields and what runs off the field isn’t slowed by buffer strips. It’s like dissolving sugar in water. The sugar goes anywhere the water goes,” the environmentalist said.

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 dot the Western Lake Erie Watershed and the waste is dumped, with no treatment whatsoever, on fields that drain into the lake.

“For example,” Ferner said, “just one 3,900-head dairy CAFO, in Williams County, produces waste equal to the combined sewage output of Sylvania, Perrysburg, Maumee, Fremont and Defiance. No city in Ohio can get away with dumping untreated sewage and yet that’s exactly what these giant animal factories do every day.”

“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 enforceable limits for pollution and a watershed management plan. All [this is being done right](#) now in Chesapeake Bay, shown recently to be the [healthiest in 33 years](#). [We know CWA works](#) and it provides real accountability – something CAFO operators want to avoid like the plague,” Ferner added.

\* ACLE pointed to two official Ohio reports to prove that the \$36,000,000 bill is 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 (pg. 22) and
- OSU's [Ohio Sea Grant](#) data showing that beginning in 1974, dissolved phosphorus in Lake Erie declined for 20 years, but since CAFOs were introduced in the mid-'90s it has climbed back to 1974 levels when wastewater plants were still dumping raw sewage and phosphorus was still in detergents.

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