

20 August 2014

The Honorable John R. Kasich
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117



Dear Governor Kasich,

On behalf of the Ohio Conservation Federation (OCF) and its members -- **Lake Erie Charter Boat Association, Ohio State Trappers Association, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Wildlife Federation, Buckeye Firearms Association, and Buckeye Big Buck Club** -- I am writing concerning the harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie.

Thank you for the leadership the State of Ohio is showing on this issue. Improving water quality and stopping harmful algal blooms is a top priority for OCF. Lake Erie is a continentally important natural resource and is enjoyed by legions of people who like to hunt, trap, fish, and enjoy the outdoors with family and friends. The members of OCF represent thousands of Ohioans.

This summer OCF participated in two meetings hosted by U.S. Senator Rob Portman on the topic of toxic algae. Some of our member organizations, especially the Lake Erie Charter Boat Association (host of Governor's Fish Ohio Day), have been very engaged in this topic.

OCF asks that the state of Ohio do all it can to initiate land use changes and conservation practices that would result in substantially more acreage of environmentally important wetlands, woodlands and grasslands in the watershed of western Lake Erie. Several good conservation programs are already in place through state, federal and local partnerships where landowners can voluntarily restore these ecosystems that help with water purification.

Working cooperatively with USDA and state and local partners, CREP along with other programs authorized by the recent 2014 Farm Bill, could all lead to long term healing of western Lake Erie. OCF asks that much more emphasis and additional funding be placed on these existing stewardship programs with intensified efforts in the Maumee, Portage and Sandusky river basins. Specifically, an existing program OCF would like to see funded and promoted is the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. There have been recent notifications that the CREP program would be shut down due to lack of required 20% state/local match to receive 80% funding from the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill. Since the vast majority of this land is privately owned farms, a great deal of outreach to landowners and more funding will be needed to achieve land use improvement. Two OCF members, Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited, have landowner programs in place that could help towards on the ground conservation in Northwest Ohio. The Ohio Division of Wildlife also offers outstanding assistance through private land biologists. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also has a program to help on private land in Northwest Ohio. These aforementioned organizations have a

good working relationship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies of NRCS and FSA in Ohio. Now an intensified effort driven by our top public officials is needed to help this dire situation

The water quality issue in Lake Erie and around the state is a very big problem for Ohio. OCF and its members pledge to do all we can to help you and other leaders who are working on this problem.

Sincerely,

Matt Misicka

Chris Nook
President

23200 Commerce Park Dr
Beachwood, OH 44122

cnook@helixlinear.com

(216) 470-1083

Matt Misicka
Vice President

3668 Darby Knolls Blvd
Hilliard, OH 43026

mattmisicka@gmail.com

(614) 581-9283

Steve Gray
Policy Advisor

13466 Charleston Pk
Kingston, OH 45644

stevenagray@yahoo.com

(740) 655-2339