

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015

To the Governors and Premiers of the Great Lakes states and provinces:

The Victoria Day and Memorial Day holidays mark the official start of summer for millions of people around the Great Lakes. Early summer rituals are underway as people dig out their bathing suits, stock up on sunscreen, and plan trips to the nearest beach. But, for people living near western Lake Erie, summer means something very different – the appearance of slimy, lime green water in the lake, closed beaches, and most worryingly, concerns about drinking water safety. Why? It's all due to toxic algal blooms that plague large parts of the western Lake Erie basin each summer.

We know that the algal blooms, fueled by nutrient pollution running into the water, will return again this summer. And, they will continue to return summer after summer until farmland runoff and sewage treatment are addressed comprehensively. Even more concerning: thanks to previous damage to the lake, the impacts of invasive zebra and quagga mussels that exacerbate pollution problems, and the effects of a changing climate, the nutrient problem will likely get worse if we do nothing.

The region experienced a serious wake-up call last summer. Last August, nearly half a million residents of the Toledo area faced a drinking water ban lasting more than two days and hundreds of residents of Pelee Island faced a ban lasting nearly two weeks because a massive toxic algal bloom made water from Lake Erie unsafe to drink. It is unacceptable that Lake Erie has been polluted so significantly that drinking water for approximately 11 million Americans and Canadians is at risk. Fortunately, this problem is not out of our control. It is preventable.

**Report after report by leading university researchers and government agencies show that the science is clear: dissolved phosphorus from agricultural runoff is driving the resurgence of harmful algal blooms. We call on you, the governors and premiers of the Great Lakes states and provinces, to commit to at least a 40 percent reduction of phosphorus entering western Lake Erie, with an emphasis on reducing agricultural sources. This reduction commitment must be accompanied by an identification of sources of phosphorus, a timetable with a firm deadline, clear milestones, and a monitoring plan to measure progress that is reported to the public each year.**

The Great Lakes region has come together again and again in a uniquely nonpartisan manner to do what is right for the lakes. And, we can do it again. Until our lakes are free of harmful algal blooms, our economy, drinking water and way of life are in jeopardy. The time for action is now, at your summit on June 12, to commit to solving this problem. The health of our lakes and our region depend on it.

Sincerely,

Molly M. Flanagan  
Vice President, Policy  
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Katie Rousseau  
Director, Clean Water Supply, Great Lakes  
American Rivers

Phil Martin  
Blanchard River Watershed Coordinator  
Blanchard River Watershed Partnership

Brenda Robertson  
President, Ontario Council  
Canadian Federation of University Women

Neil Howk  
President  
Chequamegon Audubon

Derek Coronado  
Coordinator  
Citizens Environment Alliance of Southwestern Ontario

Mark Redsten  
President & CEO  
Clean Wisconsin

Victoria Mills  
Executive Director  
Doan Brook Watershed Partnership

Nancy Goucher  
Water Program Manager  
Environmental Defence

Karen Chapman  
Project Manager, Agricultural Sustainability  
Environmental Defense Fund

Howard A. Learner  
Executive Director  
Environmental Law & Policy Center

Mary Dougherty  
Farms Not Factories

Brad Muise  
Finger Lakes Zero Waste Coalition

Liz Kirkwood  
Executive Director  
For Love of Water (FLOW)

Jill M. Ryan  
Executive Director  
Freshwater Future

June Summers  
President  
Genesee Valley Audubon Society

Nick Schroeck  
Executive Director  
Great Lakes Environmental Law Center

Liz Hugel  
President  
Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy

Tony Gibson  
Urban Waters Program Manager  
Groundwork Milwaukee

Sr. Rose Therese Nolta  
Justice and Peace Coordinator  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

Jesse Kharbanda  
Executive Director  
Hoosier Environmental Council

Laura Rubin  
Executive Director  
Huron River Watershed Council

Ivan J. Hack Jr.  
President, Headwaters Chapter  
Izaak Walton League of America

Paul Pachowski  
President  
Lake Erie Charter Boat Association

Tom Fuhrman  
President  
Lake Erie Region Conservancy

Sandy Bihn  
Executive Director  
Lake Erie Waterkeeper Inc.

Alison Ricker  
Co-President  
League of Women Voters of Ohio

Mary Kirtz Van Nortwick  
Co-President  
League of Women Voters of Ohio

Lisa Wozniak  
Executive Director  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters

Lynn McClure  
Senior Midwest Director  
National Parks Conservation Association

Henry Henderson  
Director, Midwest Office  
National Resources Defense Council

Mike Shriberg  
Regional Executive Director  
National Wildlife Federation

Melinda Hughes-Wert  
President  
Nature Abounds

Marc Hudon  
Chair, Water Commission  
Nature Quebec

Susan Julian  
Executive Director  
North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy

Jack Shaner  
Interim Executive Director  
Ohio Environmental Council

Ray Stewart  
President  
Ohio Wetlands Association

Linda Heron  
Chair  
Ontario Rivers Alliance

Kris Patterson  
Executive Director  
Partners for Clean Streams

Bob Oliver  
Executive Director  
Pollution Probe

Kathy Hanratty  
President  
Protect Geauga Parks

Justin Hegarty  
Executive Director  
Reflo Sustainable Water Solutions

Irene Senn  
Coordinator  
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes

Lori Andresen  
Save Our Sky Blue Waters

Nicole Barker  
Executive Director  
Save the Dunes

Carl Arnold  
Chapter Chair  
Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter

Bowden Quinn  
Chapter Director  
Sierra Club, Hoosier Chapter

Gail Philbin  
Chapter Director  
Sierra Club, Michigan Chapter

Lynda Schneekloth  
Group Chair  
Sierra Club, Niagara Group

Jennifer Miller  
Chapter Director  
Sierra Club, Ohio Chapter

Gretchen Gallagher Durney  
Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network

Jennifer McKay  
Policy Specialist  
Tip of the Mitt

Kevin Haight  
President  
Two Rivers Coalition

Nicholas Occhipinti  
Director of Policy and Community Activism  
West Michigan Environmental Action Council