

Citizen Advisory  
September 5, 2017

**State of Ohio Releases Plan to Reduce Nutrients in Lake Erie Basin;**  
***Public Meetings to be Held on Sept. 12 and 13***

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission and the State of Ohio have released a draft Ohio Domestic Action Plan to reduce phosphorus entering Lake Erie under the binational Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with a goal of reducing phosphorus loading to Lake Erie by 40 percent by 2025. The Commission will host two public meetings on Sept. 12 and 13, 2017, to provide information about the draft plan.

Both meetings will be held from 7-9 p.m. The Sept. 12 meeting will be at Lake Erie Center, 6200 Bay Shore Rd, Oregon. The Sept. 13 meeting will be at Painesville Township Hall, 55 Nye Rd., Painesville.

This draft Ohio plan is a continuation of the Western Basin of Lake Erie Collaboration Implementation Framework finalized by the State of Ohio in early 2017.

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission will coordinate finalizing the Ohio Domestic Action Plan with Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), who each share responsibility for implementing the plan. Each agency will be accountable for implementing their respective areas of authority included in the state plan to meet the overall 40 percent reduction.

New action items included in the draft focus on:

- creating nutrient reduction targets for sub-watersheds in the Maumee and Sandusky basins;
- creating an annual discharge limit of 1 mg/l of total phosphorous for every permitted facility;
- prioritizing combined sewer overflow communities in Lake Erie basin;
- incorporate the Nutrient Mass Balance Study;
- funding and completing engineering and design work for potential in-water coastal wetland restoration projects in the western basin that beneficially use dredged material and can help assimilate in-lake nutrients in the mouth of the Maumee River and for the Sandusky Bay Initiative;
- establish a pilot program with Wood and Henry County Soil and Water Conservation Districts that will enable producers to voluntarily provide information on BMPs being implemented in select watersheds;

- established and maintain the Ohio Applicator Forecast website. The Forecast is designed to help nutrient applicators identify times when the weather-risk for applying is low. The risk forecast is created by the National Weather Service and takes snow accumulation and melt, soil moisture content, and forecast precipitation and temperatures into account. The chances of surface runoff in the next 24 hours are displayed on the overview map of the state.

Since 2011, the State of Ohio has invested \$2.5 billion in Ohio's portion of the Lake Erie Basin for both point source and nonpoint source nutrient reduction and drinking water treatment.

The adaptive management process is central to the long-term implementation of the Ohio Domestic Action Plan. This means that water quality monitoring, sampling and nutrient management practices are being developed, evaluated and adjusted as circumstances change in order to meet the goals of the binational Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Verification that implemented programs are working to reduce nutrients from entering the lake will be needed as the state moves towards its goal. This means that this plan will change over time to ensure Ohio is focusing on the correct practices to achieve the required nutrient reductions.

The draft plan was developed with input from various stakeholder groups and state agencies and is available at [lakeerie.ohio.gov/LakeEriePlanning/OhioDomesticActionPlan2018.aspx](http://lakeerie.ohio.gov/LakeEriePlanning/OhioDomesticActionPlan2018.aspx) and on the respective state agency websites. Public comments can be emailed to [dap@lakeerie.ohio.gov](mailto:dap@lakeerie.ohio.gov) and are being accepted until the close of business on Sept. 25.

OLEC was established to preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, protect the quality of its waters and ecosystem and promote economic development in the region. The director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the state departments of Transportation, Health, Development Services, Agriculture, Natural Resources and five additional members appointed by Governor John Kasich.

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