



## **OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION MEETING**

Quarterly Meeting  
June 9, 2021 10:00 A.M.  
GoToWebinar meeting

### **Call to Order and Roll Call – Laurie Stevenson, Director, Ohio EPA and Commission Chair**

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m.

#### ***Commission Members Present:***

Laurie Stevenson, Director, Ohio EPA, OLEC Chairman  
Tim Hill, Director's Designee Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)  
Mindy Bankey, Director's Designee Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)  
Mathew McClellan, Director's Designee, Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA)  
Gene Phillips, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Health (ODH)  
Tracy Intihar, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)  
Bill Wolf  
Crystal Davis  
Danielle Giannantonio  
Diane Miller  
Kate Barter  
Richard Hylant (*attending later in the meeting but did not have access to audio*)

#### ***Staff Present:***

Joy Mulinex, OLEC  
Sandra Kosek-Sills, OLEC  
Lynn Garrity, OLEC  
David Emerman, OLEC

There were 25 observers present.

#### **Welcome and Agenda Overview: Laurie Stevenson, Director, OEPA**

Director Stevenson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to meeting. She asked for a roll call. 10:08 am

(roll call)

#### **Chair Report:**

**Commissioner Mindy Bankey, ODNR, moved the following resolution:**

**Resolved**, that the Commission approves the meeting minutes from March 10, 2021. Commissioner Bill Wolf seconded the motion. No discussion followed. Commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried.

## **Special Report**

Presentation by Lake Erie Travel and Tourism, Larry Fletcher

Lake Erie's Shores and Islands is the destination marketing agency for the eight counties that border Lake Erie. Their focus is on promoting tourism and economy to the area. Larry Fletcher gave a presentation regarding the status of tourism, economy, and unemployment for the region and how it's been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Fletcher compared figures from 2019 to 2020 and showed pandemic related effects to unemployment, loss in tax revenue and total impact to the economy. He is predicting an 88% increase in travel over the next five months.

Outdoor recreation sales were high in 2020. Travel and tourism figures remain optimistic for 2021 Mr. Fletcher highlighted some special events happening in the area, such as:

- Cedar Point will be celebrating their 150 anniversary this year, which was rescheduled from 2020. Cedar Point is promoting a new ride opening, Snake River Expedition family boat ride.
- There will be a 2-day concert at the Put-in-Bay airport called the Bash on the Bay.
- Marblehead lighthouse will resume tours.
- Toledo's Solheim Cup is scheduled for August 21- September.
- Sandusky County will be celebrating their bicentennial on August 14.
- Ariel on Broadway reopens in Lorain and Rockin' on the River returns.
- 2021 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductions on Oct. 30, 2021, at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse.
- Powerboat racing in Lake County.
- Mentor Marsh public access project.
- Conneaut Harbor expansion.

Director Stevenson thanked Larry Fletcher for the presentation and to all the Agencies that play a roll in the health in Ohio's tourism.

Crystal Davis asked a question regarding the lake levels and high-water effects. Mr. Fletcher said although several Lake Erie communities did suffer storm related flooding over Memorial Day weekend, the water has dissipated, and the high lake levels were temporary.

Danielle Giannantonio asked how Ohio's economic impacts compared to other Great Lake States during the pandemic. Mr. Fletcher believes the effects are similar, but Ohio may have a quicker recovery with the reopening of the State. He said that concerts, professional sporting events and conferences are starting to resume.

## **Lake Erie Phosphorus Reductions and Estimating Manure Phosphorus in the Maumee**

**Watershed** presentations by Joy Mulinex, Matt Lane, and Chris Winslow

Joy Mulinex discussed the progress with Governor DeWine's H2Ohio initiative. Eighteen hundred farmers have enrolled in the program which includes 14 counties and over 1 million acres of farmland in the Maumee Watershed. The goal is to reduce 40% (1 million pounds) of phosphorus from the Maumee River Watershed. Ms. Mulinex also discussed ongoing Ohio EPA and ODNR related projects for the H2Ohio program.

Matt Lane from the Ohio Department of Agriculture discussed the increase of livestock manure in Maumee Watershed as contributing to phosphorus. He estimates that there has been an 88% increase in Animal Units since 2002-2017. This attributes to an estimated 5100 metric tons of manure phosphorus in Maumee watershed in Ohio. Also manure phosphorous application has increased, commercial fertilizer application has decreased proportionally.

Dr. Chris Winslow with the Ohio State University and Ohio Sea Grant shared figures from the Maumee River in Waterville particulate phosphorus and dissolved reactive phosphorus. The H2Ohio plan to reduce the load of phosphorus by 40% by using good 4R stewardship education for farmers, addressing legacy phosphorus issues and storm water management best practices. In 2019, there was a 24% drop in phosphorus. In that year, there was 41% of land that went unplanted (compared to 5% in 2018), 46% of typical commercial phosphorus amounts were sold, and 15% of typical manure application from March-May.

ODNR, ODA, OLEC, ODH, and Ohio EPA are working together with higher education for research opportunities to help study and understand effects to improve the phosphorus levels.

Bill Wolf asked a question regarding land application of manure verses commercial products. He also discussed the need for farmers enrolled in the H2Ohio to have a manure management plan. He believes there are still farms that over apply phosphorus.

### **Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office Report – Joy Mulinex**

The state Budget bill with the Commission's FY22-23 funding should be final at the end of June. The Ashtabula River AOC delisting and public comment period has ended. A public meeting was on held on May 17, and a delisting report will be created for U.S. EPA. Planning for fiscal year 2022/2023 is being done with sister agencies for H2Ohio. Grant announcements for opportunities in Lake Erie are circulated to partners by Lynn Garrity and posted online. The Commission is accepting photos for Life on Lake Erie Photo contest until July 31, 2021. The Commission's DAP workshop was held April 13. It was recorded and posted on the OLEC YouTube channel. The Lake Erie LAMP annual report is posted online. On May 28, Corp of Engineers posted the FY-22 budget proposal which

include \$23.5M budget for dredging Ohio's commercial harbors on Lake Erie. That's good news for Ohio.

### **Agency/ Commissioner Reports:**

Director Laurie Stevenson, Ohio EPA – Agency is working on infrastructure improvements and installations for water and sewer lines. The Agency is also working on the **Maumee Watershed Nutrient TMDL project**, more details are posted on the Division of Surface Water web site. Interested parties can subscribe on the Agency's web site to get announcements and details on public engagement.

Mindy Bankey, ODNR – Announced a ribbon cutting ceremony in Williams County for two wetlands that were H2Ohio projects. Marble Head is open and nature centers are reopened.

Tim Hill, ODOT – Discussed a partnership with Port Clinton to install a waterfront walkway. State Route 163 was damaged during flooding on May 31 and ODOT is working to restore and repair.

Gene Phillips, ODH – Lake Erie e Coli beach monitoring started on May 24. ODH briefed local health districts on beach and HAB season. Applications for the next round of funding has started for beach monitoring grants.

Bill Wolf – Announced that 47 retailers are the certified in the nutrient program in the NW watershed. More communication is need on manure management.

Commissioner Jim Stouffer – Absent

Commissioner Richard Hylant – Absent

Crystal Davis – Hired a Federal Relations Director in Washington DC.

Danielle Giannantonio – President Biden's FY2022 budget has increased funding for combine sewer overflows projects in the Great Lakes region.

Diane Miller – Summarized a two-year pilot study for the Great Lakes Region and Chesapeake Bay, as well as a Great Lakes coastal system study in Maumee Watershed. Her office is hiring a staff person to oversee these two studies.

Matt McClellan, Ohio Development of Services Agency – New TV commercials and digital ads promoting the State Tourism are circulating. ODSA is working on business support grants and funding for food and beverage companies, hotel lodging, new businesses, and entertainment venues. These grants will range from \$10,000, \$20,000 and \$30,000.

Tracy Intihar, ODA – H2Ohio is top priority for the Ohio Department of Agriculture. They are working closely with the 14 counties in NW Ohio on nutrient plans, developing training for BMP's for the 10-county expansion. House Bill 7 legislation passed in January and ODA is preparing for the July 1 implementation.

Kate Bartter – Great Lakes Protection Fund has grown to \$160 million. About \$14 million in active projects are focused on agriculture in the Great Lakes basin.

### **Partner Reports:**

Dr. Winslow announced dates of some annual events, including:

- NOAA's forecast of HABs 2021 virtual meeting will be June 30 from 10:00-12:00.
- State of the Lake meeting – Sept. 8, all day virtual meeting
- Higher Education – 19 projects have been sent to the chancellor's office by 8 universities in Ohio. All were approved.

NOACA is present today, no updates

### **Public Comment:**

Mary McCarron from Ohio EPA facilitated public comments through the web meeting chat.

Kristy Meyer provided three questions regarding the Lake Erie Phosphorus Reductions and Estimating Manure Phosphorus in the Maumee

Watershed presentation: Do we know where they are applying in excess? If so, is it possible to work with those folks proactively and individually? For Matt Lane, Do you know if manure fertilizer being used on crops is being applied at the agronomic rate or at 150ppm? As you can imagine, this data is imperative and could indicate some runoff even though it is less water soluble. Thanks Joy for the update on the USACE funding. For Ohio EPA, has the agency asked for additional funds for beneficial reuse of dredged materials to ensure all the harbors can be dredged this year? I know there was some funds in the Capital Budget last year, but not a lot. OLEC and the State Agencies provided a response to Ms. Myer after the meeting on these questions.

Sandy Bihn submitted a public comment:

1. Ohio is permitting 40,000 more chickens, 22,800 more hogs and 8,424 more dairy cows in the Maumee/Lake Erie watershed. This is about the equivalent of adding 225,000 people sewage land applied to the Maumee/Lake Erie watershed. Obviously some of this will add runoff to Lake Erie. This is unacceptable when we are paying to reduce.
2. H2O Ohio pays \$60 per acre to haul liquid manure to fields with soil P of 50 ppm and \$35 for poultry manure for soil P of 50 ppm, yet Ohio permits up to 150 ppm. This should be included in the H2O Ohio CAFO discussion,
3. Please factor in for 2019 the fact that manure has to be applied - taking a year of application away means that it piles up and has to be over applied etc. Manure in 2019

simply was a factor - either over applied when not needed when crops were planted or over applied to catch up after. Manure kept being produced and had to be applied.

3.. The IJC report referenced today says that manure and liquid fertilizer are the same - that is if they are applied agronomically - not up to 150 ppm.

4. The University of Wisconsin and the University of Marquette did a study over 23 years that shows when CAFO's are added, there is more phosphorus runoff. This study looked at monitoring data up stream and downstream from the CAFO's (USGS and other stream data) and permit info. Here is the study <https://lakeeriewaterkeeper.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/wisconsin-cafo-phosphorous-04-2021-bc-1.pdf>

5. Please quit adding CAFO's to the Maumee/Lake Erie watershed and make CAFO soil phosphorus requirements the same for fertilizer as manure or at least do what H2O requires soil P of 50 ppm.

When there are cover crops, more phosphorus is stored. Fertilizer users, reduce the amount of phosphorus applied, what adjustments are made to reduce manure? If the manure phosphorus is not reduced, then cover crops where manure is used, actually results in a phosphorus increase rather than decrease as intended.

**In Closing:**

Thank you for the presentations and updates from the Commissioners  
Appreciate the engagement and the information that were provided.

Mindy Bankey, ODNR, made a motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Tim Hill, ODOT, seconded the motion.  
Motion was passed.

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:52 pm.**

**Next meeting: Sept. 3, 2021 at 10:00 am**

**Signature of Chair:** Laurie A. Stevenson

**Date:** 09/28/2021

**Signature of Secretary:** Mary Mertz

**Date:** 9/27/2021