



For immediate release

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Contact: Lisa Dinon, 734-887-7126, DinonL@nwf.org

Michigan Business Leaders to Gov. Whitmer: Ohio is “outpacing us” on fight against algal blooms in Lake Erie

ANN ARBOR, MI -- Business leaders representing a variety of industries are telling Michigan Gov. **Gretchen Whitmer** that Ohio is “outpacing us on tangible progress” in combating harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie.

In a [letter to the governor this week](#), members of the **Great Lakes Business Network** called on Gov. Whitmer to step up and take aggressive actions to meet nutrient targets. The letter urges Gov. Whitmer to implement strategies similar to those initiated by Ohio Gov. **Mike DeWine**. Gov. DeWine’s measures have include launching the H2Ohio program and developing a framework for establishing local plans to limit the release of nutrients from agricultural runoff that fuel harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie’s Western Basin.

The harmful algal blooms, which spread an unsightly green mass over Lake Erie each summer, are a persistent threat to fish, wildlife and human health. In 2014 hundreds of thousands of Toledo residents lost access to clean, potable water when toxic algae was found in the city’s water system.

An unsafe, polluted Great Lake can also cause substantial harm to Michigan workers and businesses. Lake Erie, the business leaders said in their letter to Gov. Whitmer, “is a vital component of the Great Lakes economy. Outdoor recreation alone supports more than 232,000 jobs in Michigan, provides \$7.5 billion in wages and salaries and generates more than \$2 billion in tax revenue each year.”

“Harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie are a quiet crisis that has been building for a decade, and it’s time act with urgency to address this threat to businesses and communities.” said Jimmy Banish, chief of operations at The Bear Factory in Whitmore Lake, Michigan.

“Michigan’s current plan to control algal blooms in Lake Erie isn’t working,” said Robert Kerr of Metro Group Architects in Ann Arbor, Michigan. “Harmful algal blooms don’t observe state boundaries. It’s time for all parties—including the agricultural sector, which is the primary source of nutrient runoff into Lake Erie—to be part of science-based solutions to protect our lakes, our lives and our economy.”

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The Great Lakes Business Network is a network of business leaders committed to protecting the Great Lakes region from threats to the natural environment. We are fact-based, non-partisan, and focused on pragmatic advocacy to help set the Great Lakes agenda.