



D. MICHAEL COLLINS
MAYOR

August 11, 2014

An open letter to our elected Federal officeholders:

In the early morning hours of Saturday, August 2nd, until the morning of Monday, August 4th, a half million residents of Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan experienced the unthinkable -- they were told not to consume tap water. While the water is now safe to consume, danger remains lurking off of our shoreline in the form of harmful algal blooms (HABs). Eleven million people rely on Lake Erie for their water supply; millions more receive water from other bodies of water that face the same potential of being impacted by HABs.

Despite meeting phosphorus reduction targets that are a part of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, HABs have been increasing not decreasing. Studies suggest additional reductions in phosphorus coming into the western and central basins of Lake Erie are needed.

Toledo is not the primary contributor in the creation of HABs and is purely a victim of geographical location. Our Great Lakes provide 84% of North America's surface fresh water and 21% of the world's supply. Lake Erie alone is home to 17 metropolitan areas with populations of more than 50,000.

We are calling upon President Barack Obama, the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives to take swift action to preserve our health and quality of life. Toledo and many other cities impacted by this threat need additional resources, not only to make improvements to water treatment facilities but to minimize the economic impact insecurity that water quality concerns can create.

Additional resources need to be put into research to find ways to reduce or eliminate HABs as well as developing more cost effective and reliable methods of testing. Our Federal Government cannot continue to pass along the costs of dealing with HABs to cities that have no ability to control the behavior of those outside of our authority who are contributing to poor water quality.

Toledo as well as other metropolitan areas that are impacted should have a seat at the table, but the leadership on this issue must come from our Federal Government. We must put partisanship aside and focus on what is good for the overall health of our Great Lakes.

Regards,

D. Michael Collins
Mayor

One Government Center Suite 2200 Toledo, Ohio 43604

Office (419) 245-1004 Fax (419) 245-1370

E-mail mayor@toledo.oh.gov