



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **10-Year Anniversary of the Toledo Water Crisis**

*We have come a long way, but there is still work to be done*

**Toledo, OH – August 2, 2024** – Today, on the tenth anniversary of the 2014 Toledo Water Crisis, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative commends the City of Toledo, OH, and Lucas County, OH, for investing more than \$500 million in infrastructure upgrades at the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant to protect the safety of local drinking water. Yet, source water quality in Lake Erie has continued to decline without sufficient regulation to address agricultural runoff from confined animal feeding operations that cause harmful algal blooms.

“I could not be prouder of the significant investments we have made to improve drinking water infrastructure in the City of Toledo,” said Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz of Toledo. “However, Lake Erie is more toxic today than it was ten years ago. Our drinking water is safe, but we need bolder leadership from our federal and state governments if we are to solve the root of the problem.”

Local governments continue to face the negative health and safety repercussions of failed water regulation in the Great Lakes and bear the greatest financial burden of addressing poor source water quality. Additional federal and state support – including strong enforcement of the Clean Water Act by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – will be necessary to sufficiently address the harmful algal blooms that were at the root of the 2014 Toledo Water Crisis.

Research shows harmful algal blooms are predominantly caused by phosphorous runoff from industrial-scale agriculture and the unchecked expansion of combined animal feeding operations, which often skirt federal and state regulations by maintaining livestock counts just below the monitoring threshold.

Satellite imagery from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration indicates that harmful algal blooms have only increased in size and frequency since 2014, and many experts predict this trend will continue due to climate change and a continued failure to regulate agricultural runoff from confined animal feeding operations.

It is therefore clear that although steps have been taken to improve the situation, there is still significant work to be done to better address harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie.

### **About the Cities Initiative**

The Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of local governments led by mayors and chief elected officers working collaboratively to safeguard the economic, environmental and social health of communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin. The organization is committed to stewarding the basin’s freshwater and ensuring that all residents have access to clean, safe and affordable water as the foundation for sustainable, vibrant, inclusive and resilient communities.

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