

Ohio DAP Context

In 2012, Canada and the U.S. renewed their commitment to the Great Lakes by signing a new version of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. This agreement required the U.S. EPA, Canada, the states surrounding Lake Erie and Province of Ontario to develop targets for phosphorus reduction flowing into Lake Erie to reduce toxic algae.

Scientists came together and determined the western Lake Erie basin needed a 40% reduction of phosphorus to stem the tide of toxic algae. [Phosphorus pollution](#) comes from several sources including chemical fertilizers, manure, and human sewage. The next step is for the Lake Erie states and Province of Ontario to release their plan to achieve the reduction. Ohio released their draft plan on August 25. The plan lists actions state agencies will take to cut phosphorus pollution in the western Lake Erie basin by 40%. It also includes a new emphasis on reducing the lake's dead zone in the central basin, which is greatly exacerbated by toxic algae. This is because as the algae dies it consumes all the available oxygen, leaving a low to no oxygen zone where nothing can live.

The Good

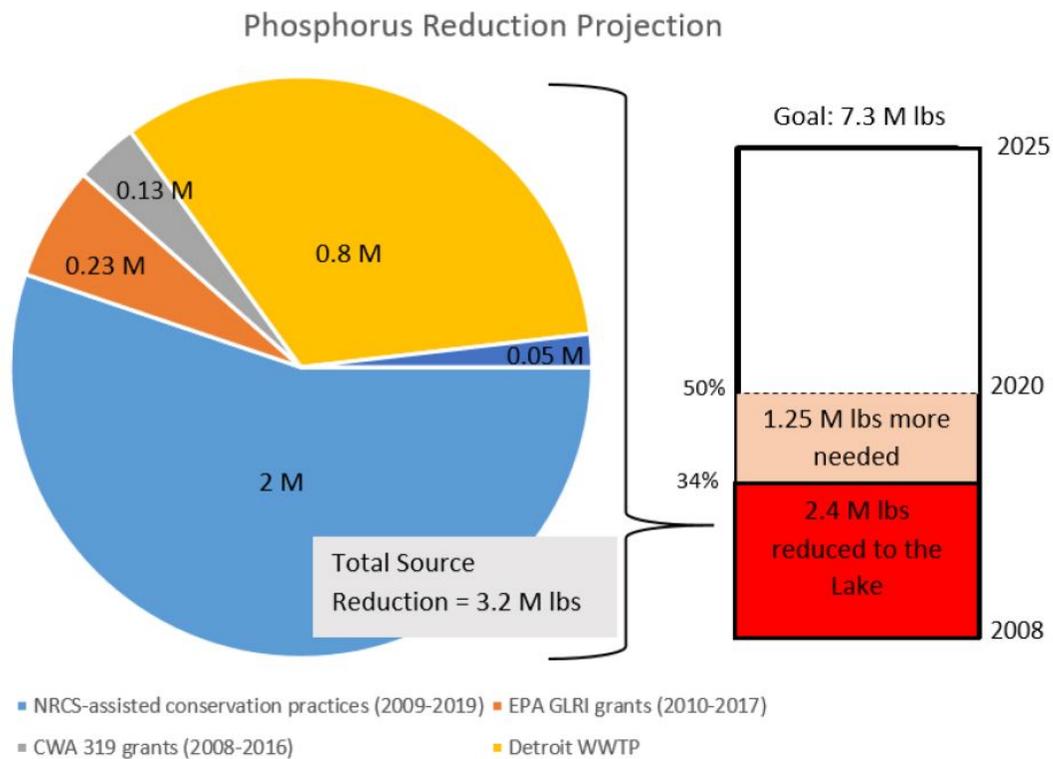
- Ohio EPA will propose legislation to limit phosphorus pollution from sewage treatment plants, and seek establishing rules to address public health nuisances created by manure in our rivers and streams.
- The Ohio Department of Health will continue to implement rules to track home septic systems and ensure they are being properly maintained.
- The Ohio Lake Erie Commission has several oversight roles and will be establishing a nutrient reduction fiscal operations plan (i.e. budget), and we hope this will be in the final DAP.
- The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will work to implement wetland restoration projects at the mouth of the Maumee River and those identified in the Sandusky Bay Initiative.

The Bad

- The Ohio Department of Agriculture is not proposing legislation, or establishing new rules to curb pollution from mega farms and livestock operations.
- To reduce agricultural pollution the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture proposes to further study the problem and promote voluntary programs, which have yet to sufficiently curb phosphorus.
- The Ohio Dept. of Agriculture is missing an opportunity to proactively address phosphorus pollution, and that means Ohio and other states will fail to meet the 40% reduction goal.

The Ugly

- The U.S. EPA evaluated the collective actions of each state and determined an additional reduction of 1.25 million pounds of phosphorus would be necessary to achieve the 2020 goal of cutting the pollution by 20%, and a whopping 7.3 million pounds more to reach the overall 40% mark.
- Even with all the combined actions of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, Lake Erie will not recover without meaningful changes to stop agricultural pollution.



Initial projection showing that 1.25 M lbs would be needed from other Federal, State and local efforts in addition to the major categories shown here in order to achieve 50% of the reduction goal by 2020.

[\(Draft U.S. DAP, pg. 83\)](#)

Ask

Please urge the Ohio Department of Agriculture to propose legislation that would require only applying how much fertilizer or manure the crop needs for optimal growth and farmers work with professionals to develop, implement, and audit plans for good soil health and keeping agricultural pollutants out of rivers and streams.