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*Lake Erie has the Great Lakes Warmest, Shallowest, Fishiest Waters*  
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### Lake Erie Comments to GLRI Advisory Board

May 21, 2013

Very sorry I did not testify when called. Had a family emergency and did not feel comfortable with giving the comments to someone else. Here is the testimony:

My name is Sandy Bihn. I am the executive director of Lake Erie Waterkeeper Inc.(LEW) and have been a member of HOW since its inception. LEW works with many ngo's and governmental agencies with the goal of helping Lake Erie's waters and ecosystem.

LEW supports the need to link/coordinate/consolidate GLRI with the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

I was in Chicago in December 2003 when there were breakout sessions for the various categories to be considered for what became GLRI. It was the summer of 2003 when the algae blooms 'took off' in Maumee Bay and far western Lake Erie. At the time, I felt like someone calling out in the wilderness about algae and Lake Erie. It took until 2011 when the Lake Erie algae extended over 100 miles from west to east, over twenty miles north to south and at some locations sixty feet in depth for algae to be 'an issue'. 2011 was the largest recorded algae bloom in Lake Erie's history.

Comments:(In addition to GLRI/GLWQA)

1. This comment is in support of scientific indicators developed by the IJC or others to define the Measures of Progress of the GLRI Action Plan. Millions of dollars from GLRI and other sources has been invested to help reduce toxic algae in Lake Erie but there is no measurement of how much these investments are resulting in toxic algae reductions.

2. There seems to be coordination of data at the river/stream watershed level but limited coordination at the lakewide level. In the 1970's and 1980's there was Lake Erie data coordination with the IJC, USEPA, Environment Canada, the states and Ontario and the universities. This lake wide coordination of Lake Erie monitoring and data is needed now.
3. It is widely known and accepted that Lake Erie has an excess nutrient problem but specifics about the sources and amounts of the nutrient inputs is lacking. For wise use of resources, it would be beneficial to target where we can get the greatest nutrient reductions that would yield the greatest benefit to Lake Erie.
4. The Detroit wastewater plant from 2009 through 2011 was malfunctioning and in 2011 over 20,000 tons of untreated sewage from the plant was discharged into the Rouge/Detroit/Lake Erie. What is alarming is that no monitoring or testing caught the problem. If continuous high volumes of wastewater could come from the Detroit wastewater plant, the same could be true of other sources. The lack of testing/monitoring in the Detroit River and the impacts on Lake Erie need to be addressed.
5. The Detroit wastewater plant is estimated to contribute 5% of the phosphorous load to Lake Erie. GLRI should provide funding to assess the viability(economic) of reducing the phosphorous load from this and other strategic wastewater plants.
6. Studies have shown that the turbidity caused by open lake dumping increases algae production. GLRI should fund options to open lake dumping.
7. While GLRI looks at immediate job creation and economic benefit from projects, it also needs to look at job retention, water related economic benefits/losses as well as shoreline property value trends. For instance there used to be over 1200 charterboat captains in Lake Erie. Now it is less than 800. Other indicators would be fishing licenses, boat registrations etc. If these revenue sources decline then the ability of states and communities to help with water quality also decrease at time that more not less resources are needed.

The last overarching comment is that GLRI funding should have scoring for the amount of benefit/reduction of pollutants that have the greatest impact on the greatest quantity of water. Most programs are river/stream specific and the connection to the Great Lake is weak to nonexistent. There is no funding for watershed planning for the nearshore of the bay/lake itself

even though there are wastewater, storm water and agricultural discharges directly to the bays/lakes. I now some industries have moved outfalls from a stream/river because they could increase the discharge limits of pollution in a larger body of water - even though they are all connected.