

Thank you, Chairwoman Napolitano and Ranking Member Westerman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and discuss issues of great importance to the Great Lakes region and northwestern Ohio.

(1) Brandon Road Lock and Dam.

The voracious bighead carp has placed the Great Lakes fishery in jeopardy. The carp are on the doorstep of the Great Lakes and unless we act quickly. Asian carp biomass could make up 30% of the total fish biomass in Lake Erie. Carp have been found just 9 miles from Lake Michigan. The Chicago Area Waterways system is a crucial choke point and the only way to win this fight is to strengthen defenses the Brandon Road Lock and Dam near Joliet, Illinois. The Great Lakes are united in support of this project. Governors from New York, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Michigan and Pennsylvania passed a resolution indicating that these states will support the State of Illinois in its non-federal sponsorship role of Brandon Road. The Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA) presents an opportunity to amend the authorization for the project and to increase the federal cost share for the program. As a project of national priority, the committee should authorize the project as outlined in the Chief’s Report and increase the federal cost share to 90 percent.

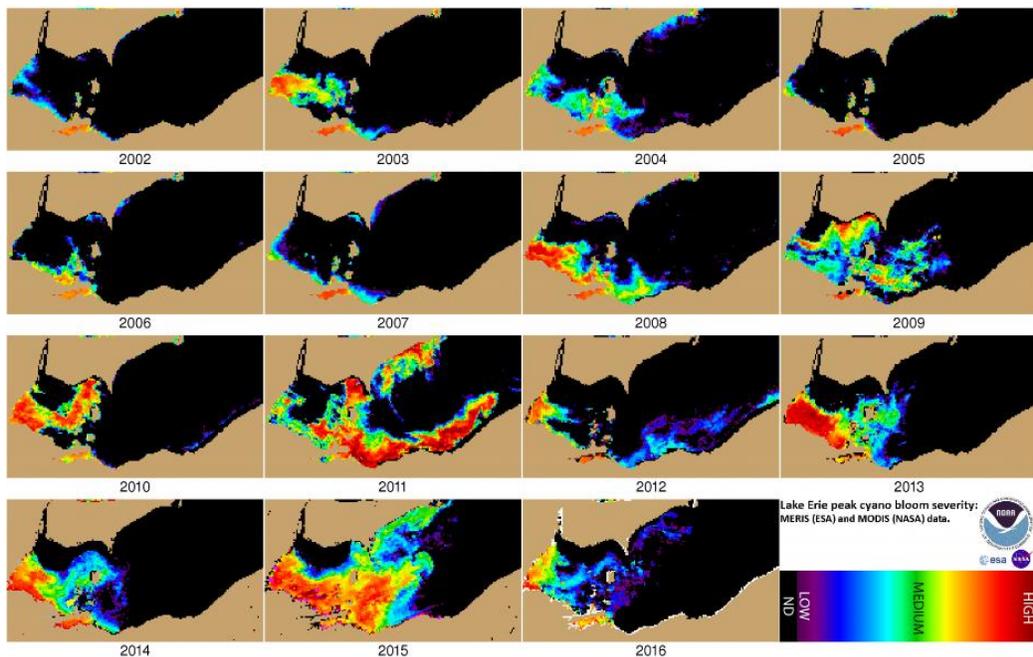
The Great Lakes Task Force, a bipartisan and bicameral coalition of members, supports the project, and will likely weigh in with specific recommendations.



(2) Harmful Algal Bloom Projects.

The Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is a crucial partner in the national fight against harmful algal blooms (HABs). Corps scientists and engineers bring to bear a unique skillset for helping communities confront the devastating impacts of HAB's. With management of resources across the country, and knowledge of water flow design and engineering solutions, the Corps is a key partner in the HAB response and control. The Corps plays an essential role in raising awareness of HAB events to the general public, and leads in innovation in HAB prevention, mitigation, and control. This committee should explicitly acknowledge the ongoing work of the Corps to test and model HAB controls and encourage continued interagency cooperation under the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act (HABARCA).

I represent the mouth of the Maumee River, which is the largest watershed of any of the Great Lakes. The massive sediment and nutrient flow has created an annually recurring HAB that threatens the economic and ecological diversity of Lake Erie. The problem continues to worsen, with 2019 marking the 5th largest HAB since 2002. In 2014, the Toledo drinking water crisis plagued half a million people with the inability to use their tap water, which required the Ohio National Guard to ensure residents had potable water.



(3) Open Lake Disposal.

In 2015, Ohio banned open lake disposal of its dredged material. This created a long-term challenge to maintaining Ohio's ports, particularly small ports. We have the opportunity with WRDA 2020 to come together to create a long-term solution. I believe we must update the federal budgeting standard for ports affected by this issue to prevent the closure of some of Ohio's smaller ports.

The federal standard seeks to find identify the method of sediment disposal which is of the least cost to the federal government, but does not take into consideration of state law banning open lake disposal when considering funding decisions for Ohio's federally-maintained harbors.

Ohio has committed significant state resources to build increased combined disposal facilities and to address the backlog. Ohio created a \$172 million program called H2Ohio, which is meant to assist with water quality issues and has been used to build new capacity at ports to dispose of material on land and to help the ports manage their dredged material.

Rightfully so, the federal government has a 100 percent federal share for managing these harbors. This standard should not change. However, if Ohio wants to ban open lake disposal, the Corps should be allowed to budget above that standard with a state match.

In conclusion, I look forward to working with the Committee on these issues of great importance to the Great Lakes region and northwestern Ohio.