

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Statement From Commissioner Paula Brooks Regarding New USDA Conservation Funds To Improve Lake Erie**

I am very encouraged by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack's announcement today that \$2 million in conservation funds will be directed toward improving water quality and boosting resilience throughout Northwest Ohio and the western basin of Lake Erie. These funds underscore the Federal Government's commitment to protecting and preserving one of our nation's greatest strategic natural resources, not just for the more than 3 million Ohioans who rely on Lake Erie for freshwater, but for our future generations as well.

I also commend the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, our many government and non-profit partners, and the business and agricultural communities, for providing "boots on the ground" in addition to financial support for these efforts. Today's action, supplemented by funding already allocated for research and no-interest loans by our partners at the State of Ohio, helps ensure that we learn the lessons from the Toledo Water Emergency earlier this month.

Agriculture is Ohio's biggest industry, and as the daughter of a farmer, I know that no one understands the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship better than our farming families. These funds will help provide our farmers with the knowledge and assistance to reduce agricultural runoff and mitigate the spread of harmful blue-green algae blooms throughout Lake Erie and its tributaries in a sustainable, resilient manner.

Commissioner [Paula Brooks](#) is Ohio's appointee to the 26-member White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. For more information on the commissioner's efforts with the Task Force, visit <http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/commissioners/paula-brooks/task-force.cfm>.

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