

**Alliance for the Great Lakes • Freshwater Future • Michigan League of Conservation Voters  
Ohio Environmental Council • National Wildlife Federation**

**Media Statement:**

*New Report Highlights Opportunities to Help Curb Harmful Algal Blooms*

**(Chicago, IL) - May 7, 2015** – Solving the nutrient crisis facing the Great Lakes requires an all hands on deck approach. The report released today by Ceres – [\*Feeding Ourselves Thirsty: How the Food Sector is Managing Water Risks\*](#) – is a clear call to action for increased private sector engagement to improve water quality not only at their facilities but throughout their supply chains from farm to factory. At the beginning of many food sector supply chains are farming operations throughout the Great Lakes region, from soybean farms in the Lake Erie watershed to dairy farms in the Green Bay watershed.

“The science is clear that agricultural production is a significant source of nutrient pollution in the Great Lakes. Nutrient pollution is the cause of harmful algal blooms that poison drinking water, harm fish and wildlife, hurt the economy and cost taxpayers money. Harmful algal blooms are experienced most acutely in western Lake Erie but are well-entrenched in other areas including Green Bay and Saginaw Bay.

“Actions highlighted in the report, if implemented by the 37 major U.S. food sector companies profiled, would significantly improve the health of the lakes and make strong progress toward solving the region’s nutrient crisis. The report identifies actions such as partnering directly with suppliers to increase technical expertise and funding that will prevent nutrient pollution from entering waterways; addressing pollution impacts at the watershed scale; and developing policies and programs to encourage agricultural producers to measure, manage and report their water use and pollution impacts.

“However, private sector engagement is only one part of a permanent solution to the nutrient crisis. Leadership by the Great Lakes Governors and Premiers is vital to address the algae bloom problem plaguing Lake Erie. At the upcoming meeting in early June of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, the region’s leaders should commit to at least a 40 percent reduction in phosphorus inputs into the Western Lake Erie basin, with an emphasis on reducing agricultural sources. This reduction commitment must be accompanied by a clear timetable with a firm deadline, set milestones, and a monitoring plan to measure progress and help agencies adjust programs, if needed, to ensure deadlines are met.”

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