

Chairs DeFazio and Napolitano, Ranking Members Graves and Rouzer, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to advocate on behalf of my community to make sure our fresh water sources in the Great Lakes continue to be preserved long into the future.

One way this Congress can protect the health of Lake Erie by proactively addressing the growing threat of harmful algal blooms and promoting clean drinking water infrastructure in this year's Water Resources Development Act.

Harmful algal blooms are caused by non-point source pollution, like nutrient runoff. They create dead zones where plant and animal life cannot survive.

These toxic blooms emit damaging chemicals into bodies of water. And they are dangerous to humans.

In 2014, an algae bloom in western Lake Erie near Toledo, Ohio, shut down the city's drinking water systems for two days.

Algae blooms have been spotted in eastern Lake Erie as well, near Presque Isle and Erie, Pennsylvania – 90 miles from Buffalo.

The Army Corps has conducted pilot projects to fight algal blooms in Florida, as well as in smaller lakes across New York State.

But we need to take seriously the threat algal blooms pose to the health of one of our continent's largest sources of fresh water.

This committee, and this Congress, should take this threat seriously and put forth resources to proactively address it.

I have proposed language to begin this work at Lake Erie, and I respectfully request this committee include that proposal in your bill.

I also urge this committee to fortify the infrastructure that our communities rely on to deliver clean drinking water.

As water infrastructure ages, maintenance becomes a larger component of local government budgets.

For example, the Colonel Ward Pumping Station and Filtration Plant is a critical piece of the city of Buffalo's drinking water system.

A historic engineering achievement, at the time of its construction in the early twentieth century, the pumping station's tunnels were the largest of their kind in the Great Lakes.

Lake Erie's waves and ice have damaged the seawall protecting the pumping station and the adjacent Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park, which is undergoing a renaissance of its own.

The Army Corps has done good work to repair the north section of the seawall. I hope their work can continue at the southern piece to reinforce protection to the pumping station and park.

I urge my colleagues to support these efforts to reinforce the progress we've made on the Great Lakes and protect our drinking water infrastructure. Thank you and I yield back.