

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Preservation of Lake Erie

Lake Erie is one of Ohio's greatest natural resources. With more than 9,000 square miles of fresh water, the lake is a Midwestern vacation destination. Tourism, fishing, and other industries depend on Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes. Throughout his career, Mike DeWine has been a strong advocate for preserving and protecting the Great Lakes. As a U.S. Senator, Mike DeWine sponsored legislation and helped secure millions of dollars to help protect and clean up the Great Lakes. As Attorney General, he has continued to advocate for their preservation.

Dredging

Dredging refers to the process of removing sediment and other material that builds up at the bottom of bodies of water. It ensures that water is deep enough for commercial cargo ships to safely navigate. This is essential for businesses such as ArcelorMittal Cleveland, located on the Cuyahoga River and recognized as one of the largest, most productive steel mills in the world.



- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining the Cleveland Harbor, which includes the last six miles of the Cuyahoga River. For decades, the Corps has dredged the harbor and deposited the dredged material into confined disposal facilities near the lake.
- Recently, however, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed dumping most of the dredged material into Lake Erie (the cheaper option for the Corps), even though the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has determined that this would be unsafe, because the sediment contains toxic carcinogens, notably PCBs, and open-lake disposal could increase Ohioans' exposure to those toxins.
- After the Corps threatened not to complete its annual dredging project if it couldn't openly dump the dredged material into Lake Erie or have a non-federal partner pay the extra costs of confined disposal, Attorney General DeWine filed a lawsuit against the Corps on behalf of the state. The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County

Port Authority also joined the lawsuit. The litigation is ongoing, but the state won an early victory in May 2015, when the court issued a preliminary injunction ordering the Corps to complete the full 2015 dredging project and to place all dredged material in a confined disposal facility at federal expense.

Invasive species

Invasive species are plants and animals not native to a particular habitat. When introduced to new habitats, they can cause extensive damage to the existing ecosystem.



- Asian carp are an aggressive, invasive species of fish that could cause extensive damage if they establish themselves in the Great Lakes. The negative financial impact could be in the billions, according to conservative estimates.
- Throughout his career, Mike DeWine has been outspoken about the risks of invasive species to the Great Lakes and to the people and industries that rely on the lakes.
- As a U.S. Senator, DeWine introduced the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act and the Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act.
- As Ohio Attorney General, DeWine testified about the risks of Asian carp before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and litigated with a coalition of other state attorneys general to advocate for hydrological separation to prevent Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes.

