



NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
Buffalo District**

Building Strong®

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BG Kaiser's remarks regarding Cleveland dredging and Lake Erie funding

Cincinnati, Ohio – Recent news reports have alleged that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers threatened to cut Lake Erie projects that fight harmful algae blooms and Asian carp in the event the federal government must pay for a more costly alternative than open-lake placement of sediment dredged from the upper Cuyahoga River federal navigation channel in Cleveland, Ohio.

This is simply not true. On behalf of the Corps, I want to reassure the public, along with our Great Lakes partners and stakeholders that our critical work to address Asian carp and harmful algal blooms is not at risk. Specifically, these high priority efforts would not be a source for any potential reallocation of Corps funds that may be necessary to dredge Cleveland Harbor.

In accordance with the Clean Water Act and Corps of Engineers/U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations, the Corps made a formal determination that open-lake placement is the “Federal Standard” for managing sediment dredged from the upper Cuyahoga River federal navigation channel. The Federal Standard refers to the least cost alternative that is both technically feasible and environmentally suitable according to federal guidelines. It is not a popular determination; however, the Corps and I believe it is scientifically accurate and in accordance with current federal guidelines.

Application of the Federal Standard is important because this is the way the Corps ensures all harbors across the United States are evaluated consistently, so that limited federal funds can be distributed equitably. In addition, the Federal Standard sets the maximum investment the federal government can make and is the basis against which all other alternatives must be compared. If a state desires or requires a different method that costs more, the Corps can and will implement that method, however, the state or another non-Corps partner must pay the cost difference. It is that simple.

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The top priority for the Corps is to operate in a manner that is protective of public health and the environment.

The agency firmly maintains that open-lake placement of upper channel sediment complies with all applicable numerical and narrative state water quality standards and is safe for the water that people drink, the fish that they eat, and for Lake Erie's aquatic environment. National-level scientists at the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) have reviewed the Corps' extensive analysis and concur that the conclusions are correct and that proper protocols were followed. Upper Cuyahoga River sediments are the most extensively studied sediments in the Great Lakes system. That is important for everyone to know.

Open-lake placement is utilized by the Corps in every Ohio harbor except for Cleveland. We do so only with Section 401 Water Quality Certifications issued by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Despite repeated recent requests, the Ohio EPA has not indicated specifically what water quality standard(s) that open-lake placement of upper Cuyahoga River federal navigation channel sediment would violate; neither has the Ohio EPA provided any accompanying criteria we can follow for compliance. I remain confident in our scientific analysis and readily welcome the Ohio EPA's scientific recommendations we need to achieve.

It is also important to know that the Corps has not made a final decision regarding dredging Cleveland Harbor in 2016. It remains possible that the federal cost of dredging Cleveland Harbor in 2016 may exceed the current budgeted amount of \$2.8 million.

If additional funds are required for any dredging project, the Corps would seek the difference in funding from an appropriate source within the Corps' Operations and Maintenance (O&M) program. No determination has been made on which projects or regions would be impacted with respect to Cleveland Harbor, if additional funds were required.

The Corps appreciates the importance of maintaining the Cleveland Harbor federal navigation channel while protecting Lake Erie as an invaluable regional, national, and international natural resource.

Richard G. Kaiser, PMP

/s/ Richard G. Kaiser

Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding

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