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**Kasich signs Lake Erie cleanup bill**

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Gov. John Kasich signed a bill Thursday morning that seeks to clean up pollution in Lake Erie and deal with the lake’s harmful algal bloom problem.  The governor signed Senate Bill 1, which bans applying fertilizer or manure in the western basin of Lake Erie to frozen, rain saturated or snow-covered ground. The measure takes effect in 90 days, so it will take effect in early July, said state Sen. Randy Gardner, R-Bowling Green, the main author of the legislation.  The governor signed the measure during a ceremony at Maumee Bay State Park, Gardner said.  Kasich talked about how much he loves Lake Erie and reminisced about how his family would vacation in Vermilion when he was growing up, Gardner said.  In addition to the provisions on applying fertilizer and manure to fields, the measure requires training for people who distribute manure from Combined Animal Feeding Operations.  The measure also requires monitoring of wastewater treatment plants for discharge of phosphorus and bans open lake dumping of dredged materials by 2020.    In his remarks at the bill signing, Gardner said the unanimous votes to pass the measure in the Ohio House and Ohio Senate reflect the fact Ohio’s environmental groups and farm groups worked together on the bill.  “SB 1 helps Lake Erie, but in doing so we agreed not to ignore Ohio’s No. 1 industry. In fact, some call this bill the Clean Lake Erie Act of 2015, but perhaps a subtitle might be ‘Heal the Lake, But Respect the Farm.’ I believe SB 1 does just that” Gardner said.  “Lake Erie is far from dead. In 2014 Lake Erie enjoyed a very good year in boating, fishing and tourism. We must fight to protect Lake Erie, but we must also promote Lake Erie. Lake Erie remains a great place to visit. A great place to live. A great place to grow a business” Gardner told the audience.  A group of environmental organizations, including the Alliance for the Great Lakes, the National Wildlife Federation and the Ohio Environmental Council, issued a statement on the bill signing.  “We thank Ohio legislators and Gov. Kasich for a taking another good step to protect western Lake Erie from harmful algae blooms that feed off of fertilizer runoff from farms and livestock operations,” the groups said.  “While the bill makes strides to reduce western Lake Erie’s harmful algae, more needs to be done to protect waters that millions of people depend on for their drinking water, jobs and way of life. All Lake Erie states and provinces need to do their part to cut by at least 40 percent the phosphorus pollution flowing into Lake Erie” they said.  “We call on Gov. Kasich, Gov. Snyder and Ontario Premier Wynne to commit to reducing phosphorus in western Lake Erie by at least 40 percent. This commitment must include a clear timetable, with firm deadlines and milestones, and a monitoring plan to measure progress and make adjustments, if needed, to ensure deadlines are met,” the statement concluded.