

**STATEMENT FOR THE HEARING RECORD OF CONGRESSWOMAN MARCIA L. FUDGE (OH)  
FOR THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PUBLIC HEARING ON OPEN-LAKE DUMPING IN  
LAKE ERIE**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2016**

Good evening, Lieutenant Colonel Jansen, and thank you for allowing me to submit this statement for the hearing record. My name is Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, and I again come before you as both the U.S. Representative for the 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Ohio, and a citizen concerned with the future of our Great Lakes.

It was little more than a year ago that many of us, including citizens from around the region, elected officials and environmental groups, came before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) urging the use of environmentally-friendly alternatives to open-lake dumping of dredged sediment. Yet, neither public outcry nor a U.S. District Court injunction has halted the Corps' plans to continue with open-lake dumping. Since 2014 Ohio EPA has disqualified sediment from the upper river channel for open-lake dumping due to persistent levels of toxins, yet the USACE continues to pursue a practice which flies in the face of responsible environmental stewardship.

Moreover, the USACE recently advised Congressional Appropriations Committees to cut funding for the Cleveland Harbor project from President Obama's request of \$9.54 million to \$5.94 million, producing a significant shortfall in funding for the 2016 dredging season. After advocating for a \$3.6 million decrease to its own budget, the USACE now insists that a non-federal partner provide the extra funding for the alternative disposal of dredged sediment. That view found no support in District Court when an injunction was issued directing the USACE to fulfill its responsibility under the law and place dredged sediment into a confined disposal facility at full federal cost. Given the ongoing legal dispute between the State of Ohio and the Corps, it is irresponsible for the USACE to reduce the budget allocation for the Cleveland Harbor project and threaten to delay the dredging process.

Lake Erie is the primary source of drinking water for more than 11 million people, including nearly 3 million Ohioans. Its waters have long been the lifeblood of the Northeast Ohio region, supporting jobs and recreation. Nearly 18,000 jobs and \$1.8 billion in annual economic activity are tied to the approximately 15 million tons of cargo moving through the Port of Cleveland and the Cuyahoga River channel each year. Permitting the disposal of additional PCBs into the Lake would halt the wheels of progress and undermine decades of achievement in water quality improvement.

While I fully support USACE in its mission to maintain navigation channels, there must be conscious, coordinated efforts to minimize the risk that open-lake dumping poses to the millions of people who depend on a healthy lake. It is my hope that the USACE will pursue safe alternatives to open-lake dumping at full federal cost, rather than jeopardize the health, safety, and economic vitality of our region.