

## Agricultural Nutrient Management (Note)

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Facing a growing problem of harmful algal blooms, or HABs, in Lake Erie and other state waterways and related public health and drinking water concerns in 2014 and 2015, Ohio enacted two pieces of legislation to address agricultural nutrient management. HABs develop and thrive in shallow bodies of water accompanied by warm temperatures, sunlight, and excessive nitrogen and phosphorus composition. Phosphorus and nitrogen are often found in animal and human wastes and in fertilizers. HABs can produce toxic chemicals that affect the nervous system, liver and skin.

To respond to the issue, Ohio Gov. John Kasich signed into law [Senate Bill 150](#) on May 22, 2014. Under the bill, passed unanimously by the legislature, farmers who apply nutrients on farms of 50 or more acres must undergo a “best management practice / fertilizer” seminar in order to become state certified. It provides an affirmative defense against complaints for any farmer who voluntarily creates a nutrient management plan that meets the Act’s criteria.

In 2015, Ohio legislators unanimously approved [SB1](#), which restricts the spreading of manure and other fertilizers that contribute to toxic algae blooms, limits open-lake dumping of dredged material, and increases monitoring at water-treatment plants. Specifically, the bill bans the surface spreading of manure or fertilizer on frozen, snow-covered or saturated ground in the Lake Erie area. The Act also requires specified training for people who distribute manure from large-scale livestock farms. Previously, this training was only required of people who used chemical fertilizer. It also prohibits the disposal of dredging sediment into Lake Erie and calls for monitoring wastewater treatment plants to look for excessive phosphorus discharges starting Dec. 1, 2016.