

Beyond The Headlines: Cleveland Harbor

Headline: "Step up to stop dumping of toxic dredge near Lake Erie water intakes"

(Cleveland Plain Dealer editorial on March 4, 2014)

Statement: "...stop dumping toxic dredge near Lake Erie water intakes"

Response: Terms such as "toxic dredge" ("crud" and "toxic sludge" used in other articles) are a mischaracterization of the material and are misleading. Material dredged from the upper Cuyahoga River Channel is soil sediment which has migrated down from the upstream reach of the river. Much of it originally comes from land erosion in the upstream watershed. These newly deposited sediments are dredged at least once or twice a year. These soil sediments have been determined to be non-toxic. These sediments are routinely sampled, tested and evaluated against strict requirements to determine if they are either "suitable for open lake placement" or "not suitable for open lake placement."

Four potable water intakes (PWIs) for public water supplies are located in Lake Erie just offshore of Cleveland, including the Crown, Morgan, Baldwin and Nottingham structures. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently proposing to use two open lake placement areas (designated as Cleveland Lake Area (CLA)-1 and 4). The closest distance between a proposed placement area is three miles between the center of CLA-4 and the Crown PWI. Therefore, there is no potential for open lake placement at these areas to have any significant influence on the quality of water at any of these PWIs.

Statement: "The U.S Army Corps of Engineers--always alert to opportunities that threaten the well-being of the Great Lakes ecosystem and the people who depend upon it for their livelihoods and drinking water -- has selected Cleveland for its latest misadventure".

Response: Lake Erie is the most biologically productive and diverse of the Great Lakes and it is paramount that its aquatic ecosystem be protected. The USACE is responsible for determining whether dredged material meets Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) guidelines for open-lake placement. A thorough and comprehensive evaluation of open-lake placement of this dredged material, which includes the use of sensitive test species representative of the Great Lakes, demonstrates that placement of dredge material would be protective of Lake Erie aquatic ecosystem and the invaluable aquatic life it supports. Further, open lake placement of this dredged material would also comply with applicable, numeric Ohio water quality standards for the protection of aquatic life and human health, as well as applicable Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

Statement: "The plan prompted Maggie Rogers, water quality manager for the City, to state in a written comment to the Corps: "Cleveland Water remains opposed to any disposal options that could degrade our source water quality".

Response: **The USACE would also be opposed to any action that degrades water quality.**

Statement: "...the Corps is dragging its feet on alternatives that the Cleveland Cuyahoga County Port Authority is eager to explore".

Response: The USACE is continuing to work with the Port Authority and other stakeholders to advance various options at the existing confined disposal facilities (CDFs) to accept additional sediments not suitable for open lake placement. The Port Authority's plan to provide CDF capacity is one of several options currently being evaluated by the Federal government to assess feasibility and cost. In addition, the USACE fully supports beneficial use of dredge material and continually looks for cost share sponsors to implement projects in Cleveland and around Lake Erie.