

News From:
Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie



For Immediate Release December 19, 2019
Contact: Mike Ferner 419-729-7273

FARM BUREAU PROTECTS THE ELEPHANT SITTING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LIVING ROOM,
LENAWEE CO. HEALTH DEPARTMENT PURSUES THE MOUSE IN THE CORNER.

Matthew 7:3 “*You see the speck in your brother's eye but fail to notice the beam in your own.*”

A published [report in today's Toledo Blade](#) explains that 14 Amish families in Lenawee County, Michigan are suing the county health department, saying that mandating indoor plumbing and septic systems violates their constitutional rights.

Lenawee County health officials responded that they are merely enforcing the law meant to [protect the public health](#).

This prompts [Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie](#) (ACLE) to ask, “What about the millions of gallons of untreated sewage dumped into streams by the county’s eight animal factories?”

According to the 2017 report, “[A Watershed Moment](#),” prepared by a coalition of Michigan environmental and agricultural groups*, the seven dairy animal factories in Lenawee County produce as much waste annually as 440,000 people, or 10 times the population of Adrian, the county’s largest city and county seat. In addition, the county has one swine factory with 4,000 animals.

Mike Ferner, ACLE coordinator asked, “If 14 Amish families can be required to install septic systems and even the tiniest village is required to have a sewage treatment plant, why are animal factories allowed to dump untreated millions of gallons of waste every year that end up in Lake Erie and turn our drinking water toxic every summer? The answer is simple: political power. The Farm Bureau and animal factory owners have Michigan and Ohio’s lawmakers in their pockets.”

ACLE has called for a moratorium on any additional animal factory permits in Ohio and laws requiring sewage treatment plants for existing ones.

-end-

* *Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central Michigan, The Socially Responsible Agricultural Project, and University of Michigan-Dearborn student James Campbell on behalf of the members of Less=More, a diverse coalition of organizations (Center for Food Safety, Crane Dance Farm, LLC, East Lansing Food Coop, Food & Water Watch, Greater Grand Rapids Food Systems Council, Groundswell Farm, Humane Society of the United States, Michigan Voices for Good Food Policy, Michigan Young Farmers Coalition and the Sierra Club Michigan Chapter.)*