



**PRESS RELEASE**

April 5, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**STATE APPROVES \$11.3 MILLION IN FUNDS FOR LAKE COUNTY DREDGING FACILITY**

*New facility will allow dredging of Fairport Harbor to be re-instated*

PAINESVILLE, OH - On April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the State of Ohio's Office of Budget and Management Controlling Board authorized \$47 million to fund the construction of Sediment Recycling Facilities across the State of Ohio. Sometimes called a confined placement facility, they are specifically designed for the containment of contaminated dredged material from Lake Erie that provides control of potential releases of contaminants to the environment. Lake County will receive \$11.3 million in funding to construct its facility in Painesville Township, which is planned to be operational this fall.

The need for these facilities was prompted by ORC 6111.32 which bans the disposal of dredged sediment from federal navigation channels into Lake Erie. As a result, dredging of the Grand River in Fairport Harbor came to a halt last year. "That action posed a significant economic problem for the County," stated David Anderson, Executive Director of the Lake Development Authority. "This is Lake County's only commercial port. Losing the ability to conduct maritime commerce threatens about 170 jobs and over \$371 million of commodities handled through the port each year."

According to Anderson, the State funding came through largely through the work of Governor DeWine, State Senator Jerry Cirino (R-Kirtland), State Senator Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) and Representative Jamie Callender (R-Concord Twp.). "Governor DeWine, Senator Cirino, Senator Dolan and Representative Callender really came through for all of Ohio's Ports and Lake County in particular. They saw the urgent need to balance a healthy, vibrant Lake Erie with the vital role the lake plays in our state and regional economies and decided together to champion this program through the state funding process."

Commissioner John Hamercheck stated, "We saw the immediate need to help our businesses and protect one of our most valuable economic assets and immediately began exploring other funding opportunities, including working with Governor DeWine's Administration and our local state legislative delegation to find an immediate solution. I want to thank Senator Jerry Cirino (R-Kirtland), Senator Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls), Representative Jamie Callender (R-Concord Twp.), Senator Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights), and Representative Dan Troy (D-Willowick) for their continued commitment to a healthy Lake Erie and the economic and recreational benefits it provides to Lake County and our residents."

A loss of 1-2 feet of channel depth would increase transportation costs for local businesses by over a million dollars a year, according to Patrick Mohorcic, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Public Finance for Lake Development Authority. "The impact would be felt by major employers such as Morton Salt, Osborne Concrete and Stone, Carmeuse Lime & Stone, and R.W Sidley. The harbor handles over 2 million tons of material every year." Mohorcic serves as the project manager for the sediment recycling facility.



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Design and engineering on the property have already begun. “This dredging project is mission-critical for our local businesses to operate. It also preserves interstate and international commerce through our rivers and harbors at a time when supply chains are life and death in terms of importance. The \$11.3 million in state funding will protect our local economy while enhancing water quality. This will help attract families to Lake County by leveraging our largest natural asset, which is fresh-water Lake Erie,” stated Commissioner John Plecnik.

“Not only is the dredge facility important in its own right, but that construction of the facility sets the stage for a possible agreement where property owners may donate a permanent easement to Lake Metroparks that will allow the Parks to construct the first portion of a public, shoreline trail that may eventually span for over two miles between Painesville Township Park and Fairport Harbor. The dredge facility and potential trail are a great example of different government agencies and private business working together to create a generational benefit for the general public,” added Lake Metroparks Executive Director Paul Palagyi.

As stated previously, the Controlling Board action will allow for the continued dredging of the Grand River by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who receives funding from Congress for this activity. This funding effort has been spearheaded by U.S. Representative David Joyce (R-Bainbridge). The next scheduled maintenance dredging of the Grand River is slated for this summer.

“This project has been a front burner issue for us the past year and our staff and the Lake Development Authority have been working diligently on finding a solution. I appreciate the efforts of the State of Ohio and our local delegation, including Senator Cirino, Senator Dolan and Representative Callender, for leading the funding charge for the project,” said Commissioner Ron Young.

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