

THE CLEVELAND PRESS
CLEVELAND, OHIO
(2) 464,860

JUL 30 1975

CLIPPING BY
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MONS 031092

The Cleveland Press, Wednesday, July 30, 1975

Good news, bad news in lake water report

By BETTY KLARIC

There's a mixture of good news and bad news in the report on Great Lakes Water Quality presented today in Windsor to the International Joint Commission (IJC).

About Lake Erie it says:

BACTERIAL quality at beaches in Ohio and Pennsylvania continues to improve.

OXYGEN DEPLETION in the bottom waters of the Central Basin has not improved and remains a serious concern.

SOME IMPROVEMENT in phosphorus concentrations which apparently result from decreased discharges is shown in the Western Basin.

CHLORIDE concentrations have improved some, but that may be due to dilution because of more water.

The report made to the Canadian-American treaty organization put a "generally very good" stamp on the water quality of the open waters of Lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron.

The report prepared by the Great Lakes Water Quality Board notes that Lake Ontario is showing early signs of oxygen deficiency in its deeper waters.

"Although mercury levels in Lake St. Clair continued to decrease, high levels continue to be found in some fish from local waters of Lakes Erie and Ontario," the board said.

DDT levels are reported declining in Lake Michigan fish and low in Lake Erie fish. Levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) are extremely variable in Lakes Erie and St. Clair "with highest residues being found in carp and channel catfish."

Among the areas of Lake Erie not meeting the objectives of the 1972 U.S.-Canada Water Quality Agreement, signed by President Nixon and Premier Trudeau, are Cleveland and the Rocky River, Chagrin, Black, Detroit and Grand River Basins.

Among cities which have failed to meet cleanup deadlines are Detroit, Cleveland and Euclid.

A major point made in the report is that adequate surveillance is not currently being conducted to determine what, if any, improvements are taking place in water quality as waste treatment facilities are improved.

By the end of this year, it is anticipated that 60% of the U.S. population served by sewers will have adequate waste treatment. The figure for Canada will be 98%.

The board is critical of the fact that compatible regula-

tions for controlling pollution from ships and boats have not been adopted and that open lake dumping of polluted dredgings continues.

The board urges the U.S. to simplify and speed up its

system for awarding sewage treatment plant grants.

Industrial discharges noted in the Cleveland area are from Harshaw Chemical, Jones & Laughlin Steel, Republic Steel, U.S. Steel, Allied Chemical, B. F. Good-

rich, E. I. DuPont and Firestone Tire and Rubber.

"Some of these plants have implemented remedial measures...and almost all are contesting further requirements... Until the cases are resolved, no significant improvements are expected in the effluent quality from these dischargers," the report says.

On the Grand River, the report lists Diamond Shamrock Chemical Co. as responsible for high amounts of chlorides and total dissolved solids.

Although phosphorus discharges began to be lessened during 1973 and 1974, the board suggests there won't be "any noticeable effect on reducing growth of algae until perhaps 1977 and 1979."