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CITIZEN GROUPS AND U.S. EPA SUE CAMPBELL SOUP TO END YEARS-LONG LAKE ERIE/MAUMEE RIVER WATER POLLUTION VIOLATIONS

Company cooperating with groups and federal government in settlement negotiations

TOLEDO, OH – The non-profit groups [Environment America](#) (d/b/a Environment Ohio) and [Lake Erie Waterkeeper](#) announced today that they have filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio against Campbell Soup Supply Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Campbell Soup, Inc., for thousands of alleged violations of the federal [Clean Water Act](#) at its canning factory on the banks of the Maumee River in Napoleon, Ohio.

The U.S. Department of Justice, on behalf of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, also filed its own lawsuit today, concerning the same violations and seeking the same relief. The groups have been working cooperatively with the federal agencies and expect the two suits to be consolidated into a single case.

Environment Ohio and Lake Erie Waterkeeper seek to put an end to what they say are [years of illegal discharges](#) from the Campbell facility into the Maumee River and, ultimately, Lake Erie. Toward that end, negotiators from the two environmental groups, the federal government, and Campbell Soup have been meeting and exchanging information for several months with the aim of reaching a court-enforced settlement.

“Western Lake Erie is plagued annually by toxic algal blooms, and pollution flowing into the lake from the Maumee River which is a primary culprit,” **explained Sandy Bihn, who has served as the Lake Erie Waterkeeper since 2004.** “Campbell Soup’s persistent violations of its legally mandated limits on discharges of phosphorous and other organic pollutants are only making the problem worse.”

“We appreciate Campbell’s acknowledgement that it needs to address its compliance problems, and we are working with the company and the federal government to achieve a long-term

solution that will protect and restore the Maumee River and Lake Erie,” said [John Rumpler](#), the **Clean Water Program Director for Environment Ohio**. “Installing a modern wastewater treatment system to end its Clean Water Act violations is nothing less than what Campbell’s millions of loyal consumers would expect.”

Campbell’s sprawling Napoleon plant makes cans and fills them with soups, beverages, and other food products made at the facility. This massive complex generates over 5 million gallons of wastewater each day, and discharges it into the Maumee River about 45 miles upstream of Toledo and Lake Erie.

The complaint filed today by Environment Ohio and Lake Erie Waterkeeper alleges that Campbell’s own monitoring reports show the company has committed thousands of Clean Water Act violations over the past five years, routinely discharging wastewater with illegally high levels of phosphorous – the prime chemical contributor to [Lake Erie’s algal blooms](#) – E. coli bacteria, oil and grease, suspended solids, and other harmful pollutants.

Under the Clean Water Act, private citizens affected by violations of the law are allowed to bring an enforcement action directly against the violator in federal court. Citizens are authorized to seek civil penalties payable to the federal government and a court order requiring the violator to take steps to comply with the law and remediate its past harm, all of which the groups seek in their complaint.

Environment Ohio is a citizen-based, non-profit, environmental advocacy organization that promotes clean air, clean water, and open space protection. It is a state project of Environment America. For more information, visit www.EnvironmentOhio.org

[Lake Erie Waterkeeper is a licensed member of the international organization, Waterkeeper Alliance which advocates for swimmable, drinkable, fishable waters in the Lake Erie watershed. For more information, visit \[www.LakeErieWaterkeeper.org\]\(http://www.LakeErieWaterkeeper.org\)](#)

The groups are represented by the Boston-based, non-profit National Environmental Law Center (www.NELC.org), which represents citizen groups across the country in actions to enforce the nation’s environmental laws, and by attorney Christos Georgalis of the Cleveland firm Flannery Georgalis LLC.