

PETITION FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CHARTER

Constitution of Ohio, Art. XVIII, Section 9 and 14; Revised Code 731.28 - .41, 3503.06

To be signed by ten percent of the electors, based upon the total vote cast
at the last preceding general municipal election.

**NOTICE – Whoever knowingly signs this petition more than once, signs a name other than his own,
or signs when not a legal voter, is liable to prosecution.**

To the Council, the legislative authority of the City of Toledo, Ohio:

We, the undersigned, qualified electors of the City of Toledo, Ohio respectfully petition the legislative authority to forthwith provide by Ordinance, for the submission to the electors of the City of Toledo, the following proposed amendment to the Charter of the City of Toledo to-whit:

LAKE ERIE BILL OF RIGHTS

ESTABLISHING A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR LAKE ERIE, WHICH PROHIBITS ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE BILL OF RIGHTS

We the people of the City of Toledo declare that Lake Erie and the Lake Erie watershed comprise an ecosystem upon which millions of people and countless species depend for health, drinking water and survival. We further declare that this ecosystem, which has suffered for more than a century under continuous assault and ruin due to industrialization, is in imminent danger of irreversible devastation due to continued abuse by people and corporations enabled by reckless government policies, permitting and licensing of activities that unremittingly create cumulative harm, and lack of protective intervention. Continued abuse consisting of direct dumping of industrial wastes, runoff of noxious substances from large scale agricultural practices, including factory hog and chicken farms, combined with the effects of global climate change, constitute an immediate emergency.

We the people of the City of Toledo find that this emergency requires shifting public governance from policies that urge voluntary action, or that merely regulate the amount of harm allowed by law over a given period of time, to adopting laws which prohibit activities that violate fundamental rights which, to date, have gone unprotected by government and suffered the indifference of state-chartered for-profit corporations.

We the people of the City of Toledo find that laws ostensibly enacted to protect us, and to foster our health, prosperity, and fundamental rights do neither; and that the very air, land, and water – on which our lives and happiness depend – are threatened. Thus it has become necessary that we reclaim, reaffirm, and assert our inherent and inalienable rights, and to extend legal rights to our natural environment in order to ensure that the natural world, along with our values, our interests, and our rights, are no longer subordinated to the accumulation of surplus wealth and unaccountable political power.

We the people of the City of Toledo affirm Article 1, Section 1, of the Ohio State Constitution, which states: “All men are, by nature, free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and seeking and obtaining happiness and safety.”

We the people of the City of Toledo affirm Article 1, Section 2, of the Ohio State Constitution, which states: “All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right to alter, reform, or abolish the same, whenever they may deem it necessary; and no special privileges or immunities shall ever be granted, that may not be altered, revoked, or repealed by the general assembly.”

And since all power of governance is inherent in the people, we, the people of the City of Toledo, declare and enact this Lake Erie Bill of Rights, which establishes irrevocable rights for the Lake Erie Ecosystem to exist, flourish and naturally evolve, a right to a healthy environment for the residents of Toledo, and which elevates the rights of the community and its natural environment over powers claimed by certain corporations.

Section 1 – Statements of Law – A Community Bill of Rights

(a) Rights of Lake Erie Ecosystem. Lake Erie, and the Lake Erie watershed, possess the right to exist, flourish, and naturally evolve. The Lake Erie Ecosystem shall include all natural water features, communities of organisms, soil as well as terrestrial and aquatic sub ecosystems that are part of Lake Erie and its watershed.

(b) Right to a Clean and Healthy Environment. The people of the City of Toledo possess the right to a clean and healthy environment, which shall include the right to a clean and healthy Lake Erie and Lake Erie ecosystem.

(c) Right of Local Community Self-Government. The people of the City of Toledo possess both a collective and individual right to self-government in their local community, a right to a system of government that embodies that right, and the right to a system of government that protects and secures their human, civil, and collective rights.

(d) Rights as Self-Executing. All rights secured by this law are inherent, fundamental, and unalienable, and shall be self-executing and enforceable against both private and public actors. Further implementing legislation shall not be required for the City of Toledo, the residents of the City, or the ecosystems and natural communities protected by this law, to enforce all of the provisions of this law.

Section 2 – Statements of Law – Prohibitions Necessary to Secure the Bill of Rights

(a) It shall be unlawful for any corporation or government to violate the rights recognized and secured by this law. “Corporation” shall include any business entity.

(b) No permit, license, privilege, charter, or other authorization issued to a corporation, by any state or federal entity, that would violate the prohibitions of this law or any rights secured by this law, shall be deemed valid within the City of Toledo.

Section 3 – Enforcement

(a) Any corporation or government that violates any provision of this law shall be guilty of an offense and, upon conviction thereof, shall be sentenced to pay the maximum fine allowable under State law for that violation. Each day or portion thereof, and violation of each section of this law, shall count as a separate violation.

(b) The City of Toledo, or any resident of the City, may enforce the rights and prohibitions of this law through an action brought in the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas, General Division. In such an action, the City of Toledo or the resident shall be entitled to recover all costs of litigation, including, without limitation, witness and attorney fees.

(c) Governments and corporations engaged in activities that violate the rights of the Lake Erie Ecosystem, in or from any jurisdiction, shall be strictly liable for all harms and rights violations resulting from those activities.

(d) The Lake Erie Ecosystem may enforce its rights, and this law's prohibitions, through an action prosecuted either by the City of Toledo or a resident or residents of the City in the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas, General Division. Such court action shall be brought in the name of the Lake Erie Ecosystem as the real party in interest. Damages shall be measured by the cost of restoring the Lake Erie Ecosystem and its constituent parts at least to their status immediately before the commencement of the acts resulting in injury, and shall be paid to the City of Toledo to be used exclusively for the full and complete restoration of the Lake Erie Ecosystem and its constituent parts to that status.

Section 4 – Enforcement – Corporate Powers

(a) Corporations that violate this law, or that seek to violate this law, shall not be deemed to be "persons" to the extent that such treatment would interfere with the rights or prohibitions enumerated by this law, nor shall they possess any other legal rights, powers, privileges, immunities, or duties that would interfere with the rights or prohibitions enumerated by this law, including the power to assert state or federal preemptive laws in an attempt to overturn this law, or the power to assert that the people of the City of Toledo lack the authority to adopt this law.

(b) All laws adopted by the legislature of the State of Ohio, and rules adopted by any State agency, shall be the law of the City of Toledo only to the extent that they do not violate the rights or prohibitions of this law.

Section 5 – Effective Date and Existing Permit Holders

This law shall be effective immediately on the date of its enactment, at which point the law shall apply to any and all actions that would violate this law regardless of the date of any applicable local, state, or federal permit.

Section 6 – Severability

The provisions of this law are severable. If any court decides that any section, clause, sentence, part, or provision of this law is illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect, impair, or invalidate any of the remaining sections, clauses, sentences, parts, or provisions of the law. This law would have been enacted without the invalid sections.

Section 7 – Repealer

All inconsistent provisions of prior laws adopted by the City of Toledo are hereby repealed, but only to the extent necessary to remedy the inconsistency.

Pursuant to Charter Section 94, we hereby designate the following petitioners as a committee to be regarded as filing this petition or its circulation:

1. Brittney Ann Bradner, 1655 Kedron St Toledo, Ohio 43605
2. Julian C. Mack, 2124 Joffre Ave Toledo, Ohio 43607
3. Michelene McGreevy, 2621 Whiteway Rd Apt 5 Toledo, Ohio 43606
4. Sean M. Nestor, 4640 288th Street, Toledo, Ohio 43611
5. Bryan Twitchell, 2509 Aldringham Rd Toledo, Ohio 43606

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Signatures on this petition must only be from the City of Toledo, Lucas County, Ohio and must be written in ink.

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AFFIDAVIT OF CIRCULATOR – Toledo Charter Section 92

I, _____, [PRINT NAME OF CIRCULATOR], being first duly sworn, do depose and say that I am the circulator of the foregoing initiative petition containing _____ [NUMBER] signatures and to the best of my knowledge and belief each signature is the genuine signature of the person it purports to be, and that it was made in my presence. I make this affidavit under penalty of election falsification.

**WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION
FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A
FELONY IN THE FIFTH DEGREE**

Signature of Circulator

Permanent Resident Address of Circulator

NOTARY

The foregoing was sworn to me and subscribed in my presence on this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public