



Protecting the Common Waters of the Great Lakes Basin
Through Public Trust Solutions

July 9, 2018

Christine Alexander, Manager
Permits Section
Water Resources Division
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: Draft NPDES PERMIT NO. MI0037028 for the Fermi 2 Power Plant in Newport, Michigan

Dear Ms. Alexander,

We are writing to comment on this proposed permit in light of the paramount importance of taking all feasible and prudent measures to address the problem of overenrichment of the waters of western Lake Erie and resultant severe algal blooms.

Our review of this draft permit has been unable to find evidence that the Department has reviewed and drafted this permit, which authorizes a discharge of total phosphorus of up to 380 pounds a month, or 4,560 pounds per year, in the context of the State of Michigan's commitment in both the 2015 Western Basin of Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement and the March 2018 Lake Erie Domestic action Plan to reduce phosphorus loadings 20% from 2008 levels by 2020 and 40% by 2025. Further, given that the Department has listed Michigan's Lake Erie waters as impaired pursuant to Section 303(b) of the Clean Water Act, we ask whether the proposed loading from this source is consistent with any Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) that is being drafted or will be drafted in conformance with the impaired listing.

Finally, we ask whether the Department has performed a technical analysis of the extent to which the thermal discharge from Fermi 2 contributes to the formation of algal blooms in the waters of western Lake Erie. "Thermal discharges from power plants tend to create conditions that are conducive to harmful algal blooms, because they like warm water," said Dr. Jeffrey Reuter, former director of Ohio State University's Stone Laboratory, in 2016. We understand that Fermi-2's effluent temperature has ranged as high as 97 degrees.

We would appreciate your response to these concerns and if any are unaddressed, we request revision of the draft permit to bring it into conformance with the Department's commitments and law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Liz Kirkwood'.

Liz Kirkwood
Executive Director