

# Water Quality Council FY26 (7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026)

## Annual Work Program

*Updated to reflect change to Lake Erie West Regional Council*

**Purpose:** To protect and improve the water quality of the Lake Erie West region's streams and lakes, for the economy, recreation, and safe, reliable public water supplies by providing technical expertise. The Water Quality Council (WQC) will serve as a regional forum for education, advocacy, and grantsmanship for our members and stakeholders.

### Element Number 51170 Water Quality Council (WQC)

**Goal:** Coordinate and recommend positions on water quality issues and policies to the Lake Erie West Regional Council Governing Board in an effort to improve and protect water quality in our region and Lake Erie.

**Objectives:**

- Develop meeting programs to address current and long-term water quality goals of the region.
- Provide guidance related to water quality issues to educate legislators, mayors, city councils, county boards, etc., as appropriate.
- Collaborate on grants, loans, and other state and federal program funding opportunities.
- Provide outreach and communication with members, media, and the public.
- Create reports or presentations to communicate regional priorities and program accomplishments
- Provide assistance and coordination to members of TMACOG, both individually and on a regional basis, with funding for sanitary sewerage, water supply, stormwater infrastructure, or water quality restoration or remediation projects.
- Develop framework for an annual meeting to share current events in the region's water quality realm.
- Develop and update the *Agenda for Lake Erie*, TMACOG's water quality policy document recommended for support by the Lake Erie West Regional Council Governing Board.
- Maintain and recruit members and leadership of the WQC.
- Administer TMACOG's Water Quality Planning Program

### Element Number 51200 Water Quality Program Development

**Goal:** To develop and secure funding for environmental programs and projects for Lake Erie West Regional Council and in partnership with our members.

**Objectives:**

- Develop projects and programs and pursue grant opportunities to support the goals of:
  1. *The Lake Erie West Regional Council Areawide Water Quality Management Plan*
  2. *The Agenda for Lake Erie*
  3. The Lake Erie West Regional Council's Water Quality Council and recommendations of water quality advisory groups
  4. The Great Lake Water Quality Agreement, Annex 4
  5. Regionally recognized watershed plans developed through an inclusive process

6. *Maumee Area of Concern Stage 2 Watershed Restoration Plan.*

7. Balanced Growth principles

**Element Number    51300    Areawide Water Quality Management Plan (AWQMP)**

**Goal:** To provide regional wastewater planning and facilitate consensus building on wastewater policy in the Lake Erie West Regional Council planning area

**Objectives:**

- Develop and update the Areawide Water Quality Management Plan (also known as the 208 Plan), seek board approval, and submit to Ohio EPA and Michigan EGLE for certification.
- Coordinate with designated management agencies (DMAs) to update wastewater capital improvements needs and other relevant information for each facility planning area (FPA)
- Assist unsewered communities with wastewater infrastructure planning to address water quality and public health issues
- Maintain GIS data for FPAs, wastewater prescriptions, critical sewage areas, and other data relevant to regional wastewater planning
- Update the AWQMP to include timely topics, address drinking and source water, and develop updated planning tools and mapping.
- Visit wastewater treatment facilities to collect information as needed to update the AWQMP
- Share the AWQMP and related data on the Lake Erie West Regional Council website
- Provide opportunities for public outreach and participation and provide public notice of changes impacting communities.
- Facilitate wastewater boundary discussions and conduct dispute negotiations as needed
- Coordinate with Ohio EPA and DMAs to review wastewater permits to install for compliance with the adopted 208 Plan.
- Provide professional development opportunities for water and wastewater operators and provide documented contact hours.
- Coordinate with other Ohio water quality planning programs through the Ohio Association of Regional Councils

**Element Number    51510    Water Workforce Development**

**Goal:** ~~Strengthen collaboration to support the changing needs of the water utility workforce in northwest Ohio.~~

**Objectives:**

- ~~Develop a regional water and wastewater workforce collaborative to address regional workforce needs in northwest Ohio.~~
- ~~Provide training and a clear career path for future water and wastewater operators in secondary education/career tech, through community college, and on to possible apprenticeships, internships, or bachelor's degree programs.~~
- ~~Recruit future operators through targeted and innovative approaches.~~
- ~~Connect program participants with local utilities.~~
- ~~Make the program available to other areas of Ohio and the U.S.~~

## **Element Number 51510 Water Workforce Coalition**

**Goal:** Ensure that utilities of all sizes in the Lake Erie West region have access to well-trained entry level workforce, resources to advance operators, and plans for succession.

### **Objectives:**

- Create formal structure for a coalition of utilities, educational institutions, and community partners that will work collaboratively to –
  - Raise awareness and enthusiasm for water sector careers and recruit new workers into water sector careers
  - Advise the implementation of the entry level Water Treatment Professions Certificate Program at Owens Community College
  - Advise the development of courses and training opportunities for advanced licenses
  - Coordinate with state and regional professional associations to ensure access to training opportunities
  - Identify opportunities for regional cooperation in standardizing operator pay, succession planning, and developing shared employment resources
- Identify opportunities to improve collaboration with water workforce partners in Ohio and the Great Lakes Region and
- Maintain the Water Workforce Coalition website to share resources and job openings

## **Element Number 51600 Regional Water Planning Committee**

**Goal:** Provide a forum for elected officials to examine regional drinking water wastewater, and stormwater systems

### **Objectives:**

- Reconvene at call of the Water Quality Council chair or as requested by Lake Erie West Regional Council members.

## **Other WQ program activities to be presented for WQC approval in May**

Element Number	51305	Mapping Assistance to County Health Departments
Element Number	51310	Community Water Resources (CWR) Advisory Group
Element Number	51400	Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC)
Element Number	52100	Western Lake Erie Basin Water Quality (WLEB) Advisory Group
Element Number	52132	TMDL and NPS-IS Coordination
Element Number	52200	Student Watershed Watch
Element Number	52202	PCB Sampling
Element Number	54100	Stormwater Coalition (SWC)
Element Number	54400	SWC Public Education
Element Number	54500	Stormwater Supplemental Projects