



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**November 14, 2019**

**Ohio's Agriculture, Environmental Leaders Support  
Governor Mike DeWine's H2Ohio Plan**

**COLUMBUS, OH** – The Ohio Agriculture Conservation Initiative (OACI) is an innovative collaboration of agricultural, conservation, environmental and research communities formed in early 2019 to strategically address Ohio's water quality issues. Specifically, OACI will establish a baseline understanding of current conservation and nutrient management efforts on farm fields and build farmer participation in a new certification program, in partnership with the DeWine Administration.

OACI today released the following statements regarding Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's comprehensive, data-driven, clean water initiative:

**Heather Taylor-Miesle, co-chair of OACI and Executive Director of the Ohio Environmental Council:**

"OACI's core components of farm-specific planning and certification, along with robust science-based research, will be critical to enhance the understanding of impacts on the state's waterways and identifying comprehensive solutions to address the complexities of Ohio's water quality.

"It is essential that Ohio's water quality advocates continue to share information across environmental and agricultural communities, collaborate on forward-thinking solutions, and secure long-term investments. We thank Gov. DeWine for his leadership on these efforts and look forward to continued progress."

**Scott Higgins, co-chair of OACI and CEO of the Ohio Dairy Producers Association:**

"Ohio's farmers have long demonstrated their commitment to doing what is right for Ohio's waterways, and OACI is acutely aware that some farmers need support in implementing water quality best practices. OACI recognizes this is best done through baseline establishment of practices and increased promotion and education within the farm community.

"There are approximately 75,000 farmers in the state of Ohio, with about 17,000



farmers located in the Western Lake Erie Basin. We thank the DeWine administration for bringing resources to the table. OACI looks forward to continued public-private partnership with the DeWine Administration that will ensure that each farm is assessed fairly and uniquely.”

OACI has been working diligently throughout 2019 to develop a benchmark of agricultural best practices and create a framework for voluntary certification of Ohio’s farms, all to support healthy waterways in the state.

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*Members of the Agriculture Conservation Initiative include the Environmental Defense Fund, the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg University, Ohio AgriBusiness Association, the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association, the Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association, the Ohio Dairy Producers Association, the Ohio Environmental Council, the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Ohio Pork Council, the Ohio Poultry Association, the Ohio Sheep Improvement Association, the Ohio Soybean Council, The Fertilizer Institute, and The Nature Conservancy.*