



For Immediate Release:  
Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2010

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## **SBA Approves Governor's Request for Assistance for Grand Lake St. Marys Businesses**

Columbus, OH - Governor Ted Strickland today announced the U.S. Small Business Administration has declared a disaster and is making assistance available for Auglaize, Mercer and the contiguous counties that were impacted by the toxic algae bloom at Grand Lake St. Marys this summer. Strickland requested the assistance Friday, October 15.

"I deeply appreciate the SBA's quick action to declare a disaster and make these much-needed loans available to the small businesses that struggled because of a loss of revenue this summer," Strickland said. "This assistance will help Grand Lake St. Marys businesses and the community as they recover from this economic hardship."

The SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program will be available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives and most private-non-profit organizations in Auglaize and Mercer counties as well as the contiguous counties of Darke, Van Wert, Allen, Hardin, Logan and Shelby.

Applications for this declaration will be taken via phone and internet for nine months from the date of the SBA declaration. SBA is expected to announce more information about the application process today.

The presence of toxins in the water resulted in decreased economic activity for some area small businesses, as no-contact advisories were issued for the lake to protect public health and safety. A survey conducted by the Ohio Department of Development in the Grand Lake St. Marys area showed that 12 of the 19 businesses contacted demonstrated a revenue loss of 40 percent or more during the algae bloom period, compared to the same time last year.

SBA will directly contact the 19 businesses that completed the pre-declaration survey and give them the opportunity to apply for the loan program.

Strickland announced an action plan this summer to help restore Grand Lake St. Marys to health, and pledged to continue to work with the community.