

Letter to the Editor of the Appleton Post-Crescent  
Betsy Lawton, Staff Attorney  
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RE: "Dog dies after ingesting blue-green algae from lake" (Appleton Post-Crescent, 10/15/2007)

### **DNR must adopt strict standards to prevent toxic algae**

The October 15<sup>th</sup> story about a dog that died after ingesting toxic blue-green algae from Lake Winnebago was tragic. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident; a similar story ran in the Minneapolis news in June 2007..

The presense of blue-green algae in Wisconsin waters is not new. In fact, the Wisconsin DNR has recognized that the frequency and duration of toxic algae blooms is growing. This is a result of increasing phosphorus and nitrogen concentrations in our lakes and rivers. Although the Wisconsin DNR has long promised to set limits for these pollutants, no such limits have been established. Thus, our Wisconsin's waters -- and the people and pets who use them -- suffer from toxic pollution.

A recent report released by the National Research Council (NRC), *Mississippi River Quality and The Clean Water Act*, revealed the need for stricter controls on phosphorus and nitrogen pollution throughout the Midwest. The NRC found that state water quality standards for nitrogen and phosphorus are "essential precursors to reducing nutrient inputs" to the Mississippi River. The same is true for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus inputs to Lake Winnebago. State water quality standards for nitrogen and phosphorus are essential to reducing nutrient inputs that increase the duration and prevalence of toxic algae blooms. The Federal EPA, must assert its authority to either require states to comply with limits set by EPA or require states to adopt and enforce state specific phosphorus and nitrogen limits.

DNR and Health Department warnings are not enough to protect Wisconsin's boaters, swimmers, kids and pets from the dangerous conditions created by toxic algae blooms. DNR must take the first step towards eliminating this public health threat by setting limits on phosphorus and nitrogen pollution.

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