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Cleveland Water Alliance Kicks Off Innovation Competition to Solve Lake Erie's Challenges

Erie Hack offers cash prizes and support services for entrepreneurs, engineers and more

CLEVELAND, OH (Sept. 8, 2021) – This month, Cleveland Water Alliance (CWA) will launch [Erie Hack 2021](#), a bi-annual competition to accelerate innovative solutions to Lake Erie's most pressing challenges. This year's competition will take place in the form of several engaging events - a hybrid of virtual and in-person gatherings - that will officially kick off on September 16.

Lake Erie is the most biodiverse and bio-productive of the five Great Lakes, which together make up the largest body of surface freshwater on earth. It's also the most vulnerable to the region's agricultural, community, and industrial dynamics.

The lake currently faces many challenges that affect not only the wildlife and dependent ecosystems, but also the livelihood and well-being of those that live, play, and work near the lake and its watersheds. Erie Hack brings together the best and brightest techies, creative thinkers, students, and passionate citizens from the Lake Erie Basin and beyond to develop solutions for problems such as water quality, infrastructure, and social awareness.

[Cleveland Water Alliance](#) is a non-profit organization that seeks to better utilize the economic potential of Lake Erie while also urging greater care of the valuable natural asset. "Programs like Erie Hack continue to position Northeast Ohio and Lake Erie as a global innovation destination," CWA President and Executive Director Bryan Stubbs said. "Our challenges are our opportunities, and the freshwater issues we face are not unique to us. Organizations and municipalities all over the world are looking to our innovation community along the Lake Erie basin to help generate solutions. We are working to continue to create opportunities that drive research, attract industry, generate dynamic career opportunities, and accelerate new technologies that preserve the vitality of our Great Lake and beyond."

Cleveland Water Alliance's flagship competition, Erie Hack, is among a number of programs CWA spearheads that advance the organization's mission to accelerate and foster an innovative environment that drives research, attracts industry, generates dynamic career opportunities, and accelerates new technologies that preserve the vitality of freshwater and Lake Erie. Other notable projects include a

fostering a network of testbeds surrounding Lake Erie and its watersheds as well as an annual Open Innovation Challenge to solve specific industry-related problems.

Since Erie Hack's inception in 2017, Cleveland Water Alliance has collaborated with partners throughout the Lake Erie basin to host regional idea formulation and pitch competition events. Winning innovators earn cash prizes and support services, with more than \$250,000 awarded to date.

This year, qualifying competitions will take place in Cleveland, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, and Buffalo to select finalists to compete for the grand prizes during the finals on November 18.

Erie Hack is a program of the Cleveland Water Alliance in partnership with local champions at TechTown Detroit, Midstory, Blackstone LaunchPad at The University at Buffalo, and WEtech Alliance. Erie Hack is presented by the First Solar Community Giving Fund of the Greater Toledo Community Foundation and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District.

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About Cleveland Water Alliance

Cleveland Water Alliance (CWA) is a non-profit organization that seeks to better utilize the economic and job-creating potential of Lake Erie while also urging greater care of the valuable natural asset. Established in 2014, CWA serves a mission to build upon Ohio and the Great Lakes' assets and resources to create a clean water innovation ecosystem that harnesses technology, spurs the economy, enhances education, and drives research. As a collaboration of private and public sector leaders, CWA is spearheading a critical effort to broaden the way Northeast Ohio values, manages, and capitalizes on its precious supply of freshwater. Follow CWA on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#) or visit the organization's [website](#) for more information about its impact and how to get involved.