MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Date: June 26, 2020
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Algal Toxins in Driskels Lake, Cass County – People and pets should stay out of the lake until further notice

Van Buren/Cass District Health Department, working in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), is issuing a public health advisory that algal toxins were found in Driskels Lake in Cass County. At this time, Van Buren/Cass District Health Department advises that people and pets stay out of the lake until more testing can be completed to determine the safety of the water. Do not let dogs drink lake water. Monitor children and pets closely to ensure they do not eat or play with algae on the shoreline. If people and dogs enter the lake, rinse them off and monitor for illness.

Anatoxin-a was detected by the MDHHS laboratory in a single sample from Driskels Lake taken on June 19. This is one of the algal toxins that cyanobacteria, or Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), can produce. These toxins can make people and animals sick when swallowed or breathed in, and dogs are especially at risk of developing health effects. This toxin has been associated with dog deaths in other lakes.

EGLE is collecting additional samples from the lake today, June 26. The MDHHS laboratory will test these samples for algal toxins. The results of these tests are expected the week of June 29. Van Buren/Cass District Health Department will use these testing results to provide further advisory information for swimming and other recreational activities, such as boating.

If people may have had contact with or swallowed water and feel sick, they should consult with their doctor or Poison Control at 800-222-1222. If symptoms are severe, people should get emergency medical attention. If animals become sick after contact with lake water, contact your veterinarian immediately.

More information on harmful algal blooms can be found at www.michigan.gov/habs

And www.vbcassdhd.org