

*NEWS RELEASE from*  
Lake Erie Marine Trades Association  
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### **BOATING GROUP BLASTS LATEST ICEBREAKER RECOMMENDATION**

The Cleveland-based Lake Erie Marine Trades Association (LEMTA) has labeled as “reckless” the Ohio Power Siting Board’s staff report recommending conditional approval for six wind turbines in Lake Erie off Cleveland by the Lake Erie Energy Development Corporation (LEEDCo).

“The staff recommendation, even taking into account the 34 conditions included, should be rejected outright by the OPSB’s seven voting members,” says Tom Mack, LEMTA’s chairman. “What’s missing is the most critical analysis of all: whether there is any justification to risk impairing an already fragile Lake Erie by blighting it with industrial-size windmills.”

LEMTA, a trade association of 100-plus boat dealers, marina operators and service companies says most people haven’t been given enough information about Icebreaker. For example, the proposed six turbines in Icebreaker are intended to stimulate the construction of hundreds more in the future, according to LEEDCo. Specifically wind farms in waters off Lake, Ashtabula and Lorain counties are named targets.

LEMTA sees particular concerns for Ohio’s recreational boaters and anglers about the construction and operation of the 500-foot high turbines. They will be serious navigational hazards. While they won’t be sited in commercial shipping lanes, they will monopolize huge amounts of acreage at the expense of sport and commercial fishing and boating. The result of building hundreds of turbines will cause thousands of acres of the lake to be designated closed to boaters and anglers for security reasons.

A myriad of other environmental issues add even more red flags. It’s expected that a new giant suction cup technology will be employed to build the towers. But this will likely result in the release of caustic substances currently dormant in the lake’s bottom sediment. Moreover, no attention is being paid to a similar result when burying transmission lines from the towers to the electric grid on shore, disturbing many more miles of sediment and threatening the 21 million people who get drinking water from Lake Erie.

That’s just the beginning of the environmental dark side. It’s also known that collisions with wind turbines in certain areas of the country are killing thousands of birds and bats annually, including endangered species like the American bald eagle. It’s almost a certainty that turbines in Lake Erie would be in violation of the Migratory Birds Treaty Act.

The American Bird Conservancy contends the Great Lakes are among the worst possible places to install wind turbines. Lake Erie in particular is known to be a major migrating flyway as well as a major habitat for water birds. In fact, Lake Erie was recently designated a “Globally Important Bird Area” because of the large numbers of water birds.

Finally, people need to know the economic value of Icebreaker simply isn't there and never will be. Indeed, LEEDCo has existed for more than a decade solely because \$50 million in taxpayer-funded grants have enriched the few connected to it. It could never stand on its own. Just the need for backup reserve energy for times when the wind doesn't blow enough greatly increases the capital and operating costs of offshore wind power. Unknown maintenance issues, especially in winter, will make offshore turbines reliability questionable.

The Department of Energy has estimated the cost of wind at 20 percent higher than the natural gas to which large numbers of power plants have already switched. And, the U.S. holds the largest reserves of cheap, clean burning natural gas in the world. In addition, the cost to install a wind turbine in the water is about 7 times the cost of a similar installation on land. The claim that wind power renders cheaper electricity simply won't hold up for offshore wind farms.

“But our highest priority should be to protect our natural resource,” says Mack. “Lake Erie has a unique frontage for many Ohio communities with resorts, parks, marinas, campgrounds, beaches and more. The pure vista of its unbroken horizon attracts tourists from around the world and contributes billions of dollars to our Ohio economy. Having hundreds of 500-foot spinning towers destroying that picture should make any question of offshore wind farms in Lake Erie moot.”

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