



Lake Erie Energy  
Development Corporation

For Immediate Release

Contact: Nancy Lesic, 216.392.9634, [nlesic@lesiccamper.com](mailto:nlesic@lesiccamper.com)

## Legislators call for answers about Ohio Power Siting Board process and ruling on Lake Erie wind turbine project *State leader call decision a "tragic mistake"*

**Columbus – August 28, 2020** - Two legislators yesterday called for answers related to the process surrounding the Ohio Power Siting Board's (OPSB) May 21st decision on the Lake Erie Icebreaker Wind project.

On June 22, the Lake Erie Energy Development Corporation (LEEDCo) asked the OPSB to reconsider what some have called a puzzling and questionable decision that makes the Icebreaker Wind project financially unfeasible. But after two months since the LEEDCo filing, the case was not placed on yesterday's board meeting agenda, leading to questions from legislators who are on the board.

During the OPSB meeting, State Rep. Jeffrey Crossman (D-Parma), asked Chairman Sam Randazzo when the Icebreaker appeal would be discussed by the board. "Given the concerns that have been raised of the industry decisions in the utility sector ... we owe it to the public to make sure that decisions that are coming out of this board and out of the legislature are fully transparent," Crossman said.

Randazzo said expects the appeal to be addressed at the board's next meeting. The board typically meets on the third Thursday of each month.

Sen. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland), in response to Randazzo's claim that the process was transparent, noted that the lengthy document containing the questionable ruling was distributed only hours before the board voted on it, not giving board members or their staff enough time to fully review it. She questioned why they didn't get it earlier, which is the normal process. Sen. Williams is a non-voting member of the board.

While the siting board claimed they "approved" Icebreaker in the spring, the board imposed a "shutdown condition" -- that was buried deep on page 77 within a 110-page document -- mandating the wind farm cease operations every night from March until November. This condition renders the Icebreaker Wind project financially unfeasible and stunned those involved in the project.

Sen. Williams also wrote a letter (**attached**) to Randazzo that slammed the board's shutdown order, saying it was "a tragic mistake." She said also that it was "arbitrary, unnecessary and unsupported, and the rationale provided for it - that it would protect migratory birds -- contradict{ed} the evidence we have on record."

She wrote that the shutdown order "had less to do with killing birds and more to do with killing this project....Cleveland doesn't get opportunities like this every day and we can't afford to walk away from this one. For the good of the constituents we share, I again ask my voting colleagues on the OPSB to reconsider this misguided decision."

Icebreaker is a six-turbine project planned in Lake Erie 8 miles off the shore of Cleveland. It is projected to deliver \$250 million to the local economy. The project was reviewed by more than a dozen state and federal agencies including U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Ohio EPA and others. It has the support of many environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Ohio Environmental Council.

Dave Karpinski, president of LEEDCo, pointed out that Siting Board staff previously approved the project without the shutdown condition. "I hope that the Board does the right thing and removes that onerous shutdown condition from its ruling, thus giving a green light to a project that will benefit the entire state," he said.

LEEDCo is a non-profit public-private partnership whose members include the City of Cleveland, the Port of Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation and Cuyahoga, Lake, Ashtabula and Lorain counties in Ohio and Erie County, PA.

###



**Sandra Williams**

State Senator, 21<sup>st</sup> District

Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 614.466.4857  
williams@ohiosenate.gov

**Committees**

Energy and Public Utilities, *Ranking*  
Higher Education, *Ranking*  
Ways and Means, *Ranking*  
Insurance and Financial Institutions  
Rules and Reference  
Correctional Institution Inspection Committee  
Ohio Tuition Trust Authority  
Power Siting Board  
Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review

August 27, 2020

Chairman Sam Randazzo  
Ohio Power Siting Board  
180 E. Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Icebreaker—OPSB Case No. 16-1871-EL-BGN

Dear Chairman Randazzo,

If the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) fails today to reconsider its recent decision on Project Icebreaker, as more than thirty of my General Assembly colleagues and I have requested, it will be making what I believe to be a tragic mistake, jeopardizing ten years of effort to create a game-changing opportunity for our region and denying us the chance for us to play a leading role in a critical, fast-growing sector of our economy.

I was shocked last month when the voting members of the OPSB required that Project Icebreaker shut down its turbines from sunset to sunrise every day from March 1 to November 1. This shutdown order is arbitrary, unnecessary, and unsupported, and the rationale provided for it—that it would protect migratory birds—contradicts the evidence we have on record. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a formal finding that the project was a low risk to migratory birds. More than a year ago, LEEDCo and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources worked out an agreement that rendered any shutdown order unnecessary. Even OPSB’s technical staff determined that a shutdown order was not needed to meet the statutory standard of “minimum adverse impact.”

The OPSB has been reviewing Project Icebreaker for five years, and the voting members of this Board knew these facts. They also knew full well that keeping Project Icebreaker’s turbines motionless for a third of each year would rob it of revenue to repay its construction loan and render it financially unfeasible. From where I sit, the inclusion of this shutdown order had less to do with killing birds and more to do with killing this project.

If Project Icebreaker is permitted to build its six-turbine eight miles offshore in Lake Erie, Northeast Ohio will be home to the first freshwater wind farm in North America. It will generate \$250 million in economic impact, create 500 well-paying jobs, and produce 20 megawatts of clean wind power. It will also place Cleveland at the forefront of the offshore wind-power

industry, which is projected to have as much as \$70 billion in projects under development in the US by 2030.

While Project Icebreaker has its detractors—most significantly the fossil fuel companies that have financially opposed it at every stage of approval—it has won bipartisan support from Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman, US Representatives Marcy Kaptur and David Joyce, and a coalition of more than thirty Northeast Ohio legislators. It has earned approvals from Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Coast Guard, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Cleveland doesn't get opportunities like this every day and we can't afford to walk away from this one. For the good of the constituents we share, I again ask my voting colleagues on the OPSB to reconsider this misguided decision.

Sincerely,



State Senator Sandra R. Williams

CC: Members of the Ohio Power Siting Board