



September 11, 2020 Marblehead, Ohio- For the past year Lake Erie Foundation (LEF) has been carefully monitoring activities regarding the proposed “Icebreaker” wind turbine project. The project is approximately eight miles off the coast of Cleveland and calls for six 479-foot turbines. There is evidence that this effort is laying the groundwork for upwards of 1,500 turbines stretching down the lake. For many reasons, LEF has been concerned about the project moving forward.

Past LEF efforts regarding this issue include presenting their position to key legislators who are both in favor and opposed to the project; reaching out to the Governor, Director of ODNR, and many others in positions of influence to encourage them to require further study; and authoring multiple articles on the subject for various publications.

Last week LEF took its most aggressive step yet in addressing what many feel is a threat to the lake by signing on to an Amicus Brief in support of a lawsuit filed by the American Bird Conservancy and Black Swamp Bird Observatory against the U.S. Dept. of Energy (DOE) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACE). Also signing on in support were Lake Erie Shores and Islands and the Ohio Lakefront Group.

The suit claims the project was approved, including a \$40 million grant, without the DOE and ACE living up to requirements under the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The grant was awarded to LeedCo, a Cleveland-based company in partnership with Fred Olsen Renewables, a Norwegian company that is the largest independent power producer in the United Kingdom and the fifth largest in Europe.

The Clean Water Act and NEPA require federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. The suit states that an “Environmental Impact Statement” (EIS) was required before proceeding with the project and that further development efforts need to stop as one was not completed. Instead of this EIS, the developer conducted a much less involved Environmental Assessment that did not take into account many factors.

It's important to note that LEF, nor any of the others supporting this suit are against wind power, however all feel the potential impact of having these turbines in the lake needs to be studied fully and objectively. For more information, visit LakeErieFoundation.org.