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Boating Associations of Ohio

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July 19, 2018

The Ohio Power Siting Board
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Case Number: 16-1871-EL-BGN

On behalf of the Boating Associations of Ohio (BAO), I would like to provide comments regarding the Icebreaker Wind Facility project that would allow for the construction of 8-10 wind turbines off of the shores of Lake Erie.

Our organization appreciates the thoughtfulness that the Power Siting Board is giving to this important issue by previously halting official hearings on this issue to allow for additional internal review. However, we were disappointed that conditional approval was granted for this project in advance of the public hearing today. In spite of that conditional approval, I am still here today to urge against moving forward with the project.

The members of BAO are businesses who market and promotes the waterways of Ohio. We are watercraft dealers, marina owners, and boaters ourselves. Lake Erie is without question a crown jewel for Ohio. Our members are committed to being a partner with the State and others interested in the preservation of a healthy Lake Erie. It is with that lens that we evaluated the IceBreaker proposal.

As BAO members have discussed this issue, we are not convinced that there is enough research and information out there to ensure this project would not have a negative effect on the health of Lake Erie. These turbines could effect wildlife, fishing, water quality, and navigability. There is not enough known about the long term effect of offshore turbines and BAO does not think Lake Erie should be the test ground.

We also worry that approval of this project could open a Pandora's box on building or installing additional structures in Lake Erie or other Great Lakes that interferes with clear & open water.

While we understand that this project may seem economically appealing, we are not convinced that the long term impact will be positive. Lake Erie's health cannot be jeopardized for a possible short term gain. As the state continues to battle the persistent algae blooms that threaten the cleanliness and safety of Lake Erie, it is not wise to introduce additional environmental uncertainty into an already fragile Lake.

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Ohio is already investing billions of dollars to help protect Lake Erie from persistent algae blooms that threaten the vitality of the Lake. Our membership can not understand why the State would support this project without every certainty that the health of Lake Erie will not be jeopardized.

We also urge caution on the basis of the economic strengths of the Lake. Lake Erie is a tourism and fishing destination for the nation. These wind turbines could irrevocably damage the navigability of portions of the Lake. This is not a gamble we think the state should make.

Again, Lake Erie is a crown jewel for Ohio. We urge against any action that could erode its tremendous value to the Great State of Ohio's only Great Lake.

Sincerely,

Bryan Ralston, BAO