



Sandra Williams
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Committees

Energy and Public Utilities, *Ranking*
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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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra R. Williams". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Sandra" being the most prominent part of the signature.

State Senator Sandra R. Williams

CC: Members of the Ohio Power Siting Board

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Case No(s). 16-1871-EL-BGN

Summary: Public Comment of Ohio State Senator 21st District Sandra Williams, via website,
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