

Public comment 16-1871

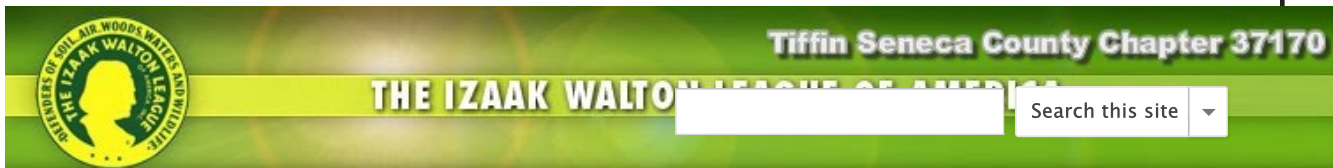
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**To:** Puco ContactOPSB <[contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov](mailto:contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov)>

**Subject:**

<https://sites.google.com/site/tiffinsenecacountychapter/news/15-reasons-to-reject-wind-turbines-in-lake-erie>



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## 15 Reasons to Reject Wind Turbines in Lake Erie

### FACT SHEET

## 15 Reasons to Reject Wind Turbines in Lake Erie

- Special financial treatment for the wind industry, along with Ohio's mandate that renewable energy be included in utility companies energy mix, have artificially propped up LEEDCo. It has received \$50 million in taxpayer subsidies.
  - *"(We) get a tax credit if we build a lot of wind farms. That's the only reasons to build them. They don't make sense without the tax credit"* – Warren Buffett
- Contrary to LEEDCo's statements, wind energy is high cost electricity because turbines spin only when the wind blows, roughly 35 percent of the time. Sixty-five percent of the time they are non-productive.
  - Hidden costs come from base load back-up fossil fuel systems that must remain on standby to fill the gaps. Base load systems are designed to run continually, not to be taken offline and restarted to fill in for intermittent wind energy making them more expensive to operate, too.
- Environmentally, turbines destroy hundreds of thousands of bats and birds annually, including protected bald eagles and golden eagles. LEEDCo turbines in Lake Erie will violate the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
  - A study of one northern California wind farm found it kills about 60 eagles and 2500 other raptors annually . . . The Tennessee Wildlife Federation reported that in just two months the Backbone Mountain wind farm sliced apart 2,000 bats . . . PacifiCorp Energy's paid a \$2.5 million fine for violating the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act by killing 38 golden

eagles and 336 other protected birds at its wind farms. . Duke Energy paid a \$1 million fine for killing 14 eagles and 149 other birds at its Wyoming wind farm, and more.

- Wind turbines will spoil the pristine natural horizon of Lake Erie. Cape Wind, which planned to build turbines off Massachusetts, was cancelled after 14-years of planning due to broad public opposition, including lawsuits claiming the project would harm property values, tourism and fishing.

- Lake Erie, once called a "dead lake", is now a thriving fishery, source of drinking water, and home to countless waterfowl especially the comeback of bald Eagles along the shoreline. It is an internationally important migration route. The BSBO, American Bird Conservancy & National Audubon Society believe that by insisting that LEEDCO completes bird & bat studies through the right process and the right science, it will prove that turbines shouldn't be built in Lake Erie.

- Icebreaker is a serious environmental threat to Lake Erie and the drinking water it supplies. First, the turbines are certain to stir up and release toxins during their construction and thereafter.

- For decades, multiple toxins, including PCBs, dioxin, mercury, cadmium, lead and arsenic were filtering into Lake Erie and now rest in the lake bottom sediment. Moreover, the Army Corps of Engineers dumped toxic sediment from the Cuyahoga River into Lake Erie for decades. There is an unacceptable risk of stirred up toxic sediments while installing LEEDCo turbines and 12-plus miles of cables. There is also legitimate concern over what else could be stirred up from Cleveland's heavy industrial past when the lake bottom is disturbed.

- Wind turbines contain 400-plus gallons of industrial lubricants in their gearboxes. Those lubricants need to be changed and gearbox seals fail sending oil into the lake below. Even worse, exploding and burning wind turbines are commonplace. When this occurs, burning turbines will create toxic emissions polluting the lake below.

- Research shows about 120 wind turbines catch fire each year - ten times the number reported by the industry. Fires are a problem for the industry, impacting energy production, economic output and emitting toxins, casting a dark shadow over the industry's "green" credentials. Wind turbines catch fire because highly flammable materials such as hydraulic oil and plastics are in close proximity to machinery and electrical wires. Winds will quickly fan the fire.

- To see turbines explode, just go to YouTube and search: "wind turbine fires"

- LEEDCo is set to sell the turbines to Fred. Olsen Renewables (a Norwegian multi-national). Olsen will then sell the electricity from Icebreaker to Cleveland Public Power, Cuyahoga County and others who

have prematurely agreed to buy at a rate that's certain to be much higher than other available sources.

- The cost to construct and maintain an offshore turbine is 3 to 4 times higher than an onshore installation, and Ohio ratepayers will ultimately be stuck with the bills. Icebreaker is projected to cost a total of \$126 million to construct, resulting in capacity of 20.7 MWh. For comparison, the "Steel Winds" onshore project near Buffalo cost about 75% less and generates more power capacity. Imagine changing out the lubricants or replacing a gear or blade in high waves or during the winter. They will produce no power until spring at the earliest.
- **LEEDCo admits Icebreaker is the "demonstrator" project leading to Olsen building as many as 1,400 to 1,600 more turbines in Lake Erie (and likely other Great Lakes) and that will threaten the Ohio's tourism success and reduce property values.**
  - A view of 479-foot spinning industrial blades runs contrary to the views many seek for their vacations. A study by North Carolina State University documented over 50 percent of vacationers would not rent a vacation home if wind turbines were in view. The other half would insist on a discounted rate to compensate for the lost view. Moreover, home buyers pay a premium for location and view. But property values have been shown to decrease where views are diminished by wind farms. That triggers a reduction in property tax revenues.
- **LEEDCo's contention that there is widespread approval for Icebreaker is refuted by a Cleveland Plain Dealer study that showed 57.87 percent of those surveyed disapproved of Icebreaker, and many more had no opinion.**
- **LEEDCo's inference that some 400 public meetings it says it has held shows approval is simply unsupportable. Holding a meeting does not confirm approval, and may, in fact, demonstrate the opposite. Evidence is clear the general public has not been made aware of the costs or dangers inherent on Icebreaker.**
  - For example, LEEDCo's recent meeting at Cleveland Yacht Club was one where the audience raised many of these questions and LEEDCo's CEO Lorry Wagner couldn't answer or rebut major questions. As a result, the audience came out in clear opposition to Icebreaker/LEEDCO/Fred. Olsen's project.
- **LEEDCo's claim that Icebreaker will result in many good jobs is nothing more than fantasy.**
  - The US's first offshore project of five expensive turbines at off Block Island created a few hundred temporary construction jobs and only about six permanent ones - these at a cost of \$290 million! In addition, Block

Island cost about \$150,000 per powered household, a monumental waste and a factual argument *against* offshore wind value.

. **Decommissioning and Disposal issues are additional threats to Lake Erie waters.**

o The useful life of a turbine is less than 20 years. They must then be decommissioned and removed. In California, for example, there are thousands of industrial wind turbines that have been abandoned and are falling apart. LEEDCo has no plan to address such an issue. Moreover, if the “demonstrator” project fails to exhibit its effectiveness as a reliable supplier of electricity (as is widely predicted), LEEDCo will be long gone leaving no plans to remove them. Indeed, many of the wind farms built in Europe 20 years ago will lose their government subsidies in 2020 and there are no funds or provisions to remove dead turbines.

. There will be a need for “No Boating” security zones to protect the wind farms just like existing security zones around power plants and similar infrastructure. But these new bans on boating and fishing access will encompass dramatically larger wind farm areas, potentially eliminating hundreds of square miles for recreational boating and fishing.

o In addition, Icebreaker’s power cables will be on the floor of the lake, crossing Cleveland’s main shipping channel. If more turbines are eventually built in the lake, freighters dropping their anchors may run the risk of striking the cable areas in the same way dragging anchors are known to hit underwater oil pipelines elsewhere.

. **A recommendation by the OPSB staff to eliminate overnight operations from March 1 to Jan. 1 unless it can prove to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the OPSB that Icebreaker’s the six turbines don’t kill migrating birds and bats is ludicrous.**

o The recommended 2-year radar study of migrating birds must be mandatory, not optional, and results required to be made public at least annually. While the accuracy of such a radar study is questionable given the size of small birds, etc., this and other science-based studies should be required. Up until now, extremely poor studies are being conducted, and the conclusions they reach are not based on sound science. For example, they’ve concluded there were no birds. But they were looking at a time when birds were not moving!

## Conclusion:

The Ohio Power Siting Board’s mission is defined as supporting: ***“sound energy policies that provide for the installation of energy capacity and transmission infrastructure for the benefit of the Ohio citizens, promoting the state’s economic interests, and protecting the environment and land use.”***

Going green is fine, but not appropriate in every circumstance or in every locale. In certain places, harnessing the wind just carries an unacceptable environmental risk and unjustifiable price tag. In the case of Icebreaker, the OPSB, ODNR and OEPA must meet their charge to protect the environment and Ohio's most treasured natural resource, Lake Erie.

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### Comments

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Summary: Public Comment electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing.