



Cuyahoga County
Together We Thrive

Armond Budish
Cuyahoga County Executive

Ohio Power Siting Board
Docketing Division
180 E. Broad St.
11th Floor
Columbus, OH
43215

RE: Case No: 16-1871-EL-BGN

Dear Ohio Power Siting Board,

The Icebreaker Wind demonstration project has the potential to make Ohio a national leader in sustainable energy – an opportunity that could spur job creation and economic growth for generations.

Icebreaker's non-profit developer, the Lake Erie Energy Development Corporation, estimates the endeavor could create 500 jobs and generate \$253 million for the economy. Because of its potential economic and environmental benefits, the project has received widespread support from environmental groups, labor unions, local governments, and both of Ohio's U.S. senators. The U.S. Department of Energy also strongly supports the project, investing more than \$50 million into the effort to be the first freshwater offshore wind project in North America.

Despite its popularity, we may never know whether this vision, just eight miles off of Cleveland's Lake Erie shoreline, will be a reality. The \$126 million project was all but scuttled in May when the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) included – despite an agreement with its technical staff to the contrary – a last-minute condition requiring the project's six turbines to be shuttered every night for eight months to protect migratory birds and bats.

Notwithstanding this setback, OPSB has an opportunity to keep alive this critically-important effort that has been more than a decade in the making. The Board can act upon LEEDCo's pending application for a rehearing and reconsideration of the ruling.

As Cuyahoga County Executive, I urge the OPSB to grant the appeal and ultimately provide a workable path forward for a project vital not only for Northeast Ohio but the entire state.

There is certainly precedent for OPSB taking this action, when examining the August 2019 revised stipulation reached between LEEDCo and the staffs of the OPSB and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

At issue then, as now, was mitigating bat and bird collisions while at the same time allowing the six turbines to continuously operate in order to prove the project's economic viability. The staff at OPSB and ODNR knew a months-long shutdown of the turbines would be fatal. As a result, after months of negotiations, a deal was struck in which additional safeguards for wildlife monitoring were included in the revised stipulation – requirements that satisfied the concerns of both OPSB and ODNR *and* allowed the Icebreaker Wind project to move forward.

Regrettably and confusingly, the Board ignored its own staff as well as the revised stipulation and added the shutdown mandate in its May ruling. OPSB should follow the recommendations of its staff and remove the mandate.

The Icebreaker Wind project – which would create thousands of jobs and help clean our air and water – is an opportunity for Ohio to seize its own future by making us the first state in the Great Lakes Region to capture the economic and environmental benefits of offshore wind. It would be a critical mistake to allow this moment to slip from our grasp.

Sincerely,



Armond Budish
Cuyahoga County Executive

cc: Laurel Dawson
Chief of Staff for Gov. Mike DeWine

Board Members:

Gregory Murphy, P.E.

ODNR Director Mary Mertz

ODH Interim Director Lance Himes

Ohio EPA Director Laurie Stevenson

DSA Director Lydia Mihalik

ODA Director Dorothy Pelanda

PUCO and OPSB Chairman Sam Randazzo

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Summary: Public Comment of Armond Budish, Cuyahoga County Executive, in support of Icebreaker Wind Project, electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing