

**From:** [Puco ContactOPSB](#)  
**To:** [Puco Docketing](#)  
**Subject:** comment for 16-1871-EL-BGN  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 16, 2020 4:01:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [BSBO-ABC\\_Support for Feathering Condition.pdf](#)

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**From:** Kimberly Kaufman <kimkaufman@bsbo.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 16, 2020 3:40 PM  
**To:** Puco ContactOPSB <contactopsb@puco.ohio.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Icebreaker – OPSB Case No. 16-1871-EL-BGN

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached, please find comments from Black Swamp Bird Observatory and American Bird Conservancy regarding the Icebreaker Wind Facility.  
We thank you for the opportunity to comment and appreciate consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Kaufman  
Executive Director  
Black Swamp Bird Observatory  
Oak Harbor, Ohio  
419.898.4070 (Ex: 201)

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16 September 2020

Re: Icebreaker – OPSB Case No. 16-1871-EL-BGN

Dear Chairman Randazzo and Board Members:

On behalf of Black Swamp Bird Observatory and American Bird Conservancy, we are writing in regard to the recently-approved Icebreaker Wind project. We wish to thank you for your decision to require turbine feathering for eight months of the year. This crucial stipulation could prevent the deaths of many birds, but allows the flexibility for data-informed modifications to the condition. This was a well-reasoned and prudent decision.

In support of this condition, we have:

- Published a recent [op ed](#) in The Plain Dealer and on cleveland.com,
- Issued a letter to members of the Ohio General Assembly (provided below) and Cleveland City Council, and
- Issued a [call to action](#) to our membership.

We note that the previous interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act has just been reinstated. The feathering condition provides further support for compliance with this Federal law.

Lake Erie is important for a vast number of birds and people who value them. Thank you for taking steps to protect this public trust resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Kaufman".

Kimberly Kaufman  
Executive Director  
Black Swamp Bird Observatory  
Oak Harbor, Ohio

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Merriman".

Joel Merriman  
Bird-Smart Wind Energy Campaign Director  
American Bird Conservancy  
Washington, DC



30 July 2020

Re: Icebreaker – OPSB Case No. 16-1871-EL-BGN

Dear Legislators:

We hope this finds you well in these challenging times. On behalf of Black Swamp Bird Observatory and American Bird Conservancy, we are writing in regard to the Icebreaker Wind project, recently approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB). We understand that members of your delegation have recently expressed concerns about conditions of approval for this project. Here we offer a different viewpoint, which we hope will alleviate these concerns.

At issue is the condition for “feathering,” or turning off turbines at night for eight months of the year to protect birds and bats. This condition did not emerge from thin air. It was required in an earlier iteration of the project plan, but ultimately removed at the urging of the developer. Indeed, many protective conditions initially called for were removed or diluted as plans were refined. What remains provides a thin dataset by which to evaluate the actual impacts of this precedent-setting project, and many important questions remain about what measures will be taken to monitor and minimize these impacts.

Lake Erie is important for a vast number of birds. This includes waterfowl and other birds that migrate and winter offshore, and songbirds that fly over the Lake at night in spectacular migratory flights. One of these, the Kirtland’s Warbler, was only recently [removed from the list of federally threatened species](#). This, along with data supporting use of the area by numerous migratory bird species, earned the central basin of Lake Erie a [designation of Globally Important Bird Area](#) by National Audubon Society. It’s why the Biggest Week in American Birding in Oak Harbor attracts more than 90,000 visitors a year, contributing more than \$40 million to the local economy, and Cleveland’s Urban Birding week attracts more than [600 bird enthusiasts](#).

The OPSB, to their credit, took the issue of bird protection very seriously. One need look no further than their decision statement for the project to understand why the feathering condition and why it was included:

*Given the novel nature of this project, we believe the more appropriate course is to limit operations during the periods where there is a heightened risk for bird and bat collisions, without waiting for a potential issue with the technology to occur... We find these additional precautionary measures are necessary from the beginning for such an unprecedented project and can be appropriately adjusted as more information is accumulated.*

This was a well-reasoned and prudent decision to protect a public resource in the face of great uncertainty. This is particularly important given that this demonstration project would set the stage for this new industry, which will add hundreds more turbines in the Great Lakes. It's critical to take a thoughtful approach and get it right.

We note that the OPSB's final decision allows the feathering condition to be removed if required data collection deems it unnecessary. If this project will truly have a low level of impacts to birds, as the developer and their consultants contend, this should be no problem.

As we note in a July 17 [op ed in The Plain Dealer](#), a recent study shows that the United States and Canada lost nearly 3 billion birds — almost 30 percent of the total population — since 1970. This is not the time to take chances with bird populations.

Ohio's quest for renewable energy development is laudable. However, it is imperative that we not lose sight of the fact that Ohio's birds and other natural resources must be carefully considered in the process. That calls for scientific rigor, a surplus of knowledge, and an abundance of caution. Well-considered renewable energy development in appropriate locations can help serve all interests while protecting Ohio's precious natural resources.

The feathering condition is absolutely the right decision. We thank the OPSB and State of Ohio for standing firmly to protect a valuable and diminishing public resource — our birds.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly Kaufman  
Executive Director  
Black Swamp Bird Observatory  
Oak Harbor, Ohio



Joel Merriman  
Bird-Smart Wind Energy Campaign Director  
American Bird Conservancy  
Washington, DC

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

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**in**

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

Summary: Public Comment of Kimberly Kaufman with Black Swamp Bird Observatory, via website, electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing