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**OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION SEEKING PROPOSALS FOR LAKE ERIE WATERSHED PILOT
PROJECTS**

Projects to follow recommendations of Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program

TOLEDO, OH - In an effort to accomplish the goals outlined by the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission (LEC) is now accepting proposals for pilot projects to develop Watershed Balanced Growth Plans in Ohio's Lake Erie basin. Deadline for submitting proposals is July 1.

Up to \$200,000 will go to each of three projects that test the planning recommendations of the Balanced Growth Task Force. The money, which is provided by the Ohio Water Development Authority, will be distributed over three years and will require no local match.

Priority consideration will be given to locally driven watershed planning partnerships from three diverse watershed types - urban, suburban and rural. These partnerships will also be chosen on their ability to demonstrate organizational options, planning approaches and applicability to different watersheds.

Grants will go to legally organized partnerships that include or are supported by multiple governmental units and have up-front support from at least 75-percent of those units with land-use planning authority. Preference will be given to partnerships that have demonstrated the ability to complete watershed planning activities or other significant accomplishments. A committee of representatives of state agencies will evaluate the proposals, with final selection coming from the Ohio Lake Erie Commission on September 14.

The Balanced Growth Program is the product of the Balanced Growth Blue Ribbon Task Force, which was created by Governor Bob Taft to address serious problems associated with growth in the Lake Erie basin. Recommendations of the task force provide a voluntary method for the state to encourage and support orderly growth and change at a local level.

Visit the Ohio Lake Erie Commission web site at www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo or call the commission office at 419-245-2514 for additional information on the Lake Erie watershed pilot projects.

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