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**OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION TO HOLD QUARTERLY MEETING ON
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20 IN COLUMBUS**

TOLEDO, OH – The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (LEC) will hold its quarterly meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, December 20, at the District One Office of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife, 1500 Dublin Road, in Columbus.

Jeffrey M. Reutter, Ph.d, executive director of the Ohio Sea Grant College Program, will present a report on the Great Lakes Regional Research and Information Network, a new, informal network that is being led by a bi-national team of Sea Grant, university and federal researchers through a grant from the National Sea Grant Program. GLRRIN seeks to promote enhanced information exchange and coordination between Great Lakes researchers, universities and federal, state/provincial and other agencies that have Great Lakes research priorities and budgets.

Commission members are expected to act on the latest round of small grants and approve the meeting schedule for 2007.

LEC Executive Director Edwin Hammett will also report on ongoing projects of the commission, including the Balanced Growth and license plate programs.

Representatives of ODNR will report on the status of the Great Lakes Compact and representatives of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) will update the group on Ohio's Lake Erie Action List under the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration.

Advisory committees will report on the Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project, Ohio Sea Grant College Program, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency and the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments.

All meetings of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission are open to the public and include a public comment period. Organizations and citizens are urged to attend this meeting and provide input on issues of concern.

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission is comprised of the directors of the ODNR and OEPA, as well as the departments of Transportation, Development, Health and Agriculture. It was established for the purpose of preserving Lake Erie's natural resources, protecting the quality of its waters and ecosystem, and promoting economic development in the region.

The commission also oversees the Ohio Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is the source of grant money

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for projects that benefit the Lake Erie watershed economically and environmentally. This fund is supported by Ohioans who purchase a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse or Toledo Harbor Lighthouse designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond.

During the last 13 years, the commission has raised more than \$8 million through the sale of Lake Erie license plates. The money has gone to a wide range of efforts to preserve and enhance life along Lake Erie.

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