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**OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION TO HOLD QUARTERLY MEETING ON
THURSDAY, MARCH 15 IN COLUMBUS**

Finances to be focus of the meeting's agenda

TOLEDO, OH – The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (LEC) will hold its quarterly meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 15, at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Fountain Square Complex, in the Assembly Center East, Building E, 2045 Morse Road, in Columbus.

Bill Goodman, the commission's grants committee chairman, will present a report on grant funding levels for the 2008 state fiscal year. Executive Committee Chairman Scott Zody will outline the commission's budget request for the 2008-09 biennium and report on projected revenues from the Great Lakes Protection Fund and the sale of Lake Erie license plates.

Commission members are expected to act on the latest round of small grants.

LEC Executive Director Edwin Hammett will also report on ongoing projects of the commission, including the Balanced Growth and Coastweeks 2007 programs.

Advisory organizations 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 resource, 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 for projects that benefit the Lake Erie watershed economically and environmentally. This fund is

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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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