



Bringing back the birds



Asim Z. Haque, Chairman
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

September 2, 2016

Dear Mr. Haque:

We are aware that the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) will again be considering LEEDCo's Icebreaker Wind Energy Project in Lake Erie. Many things have happened since the Board first considered this project, and we ask you to consider the following items:

- 1) American Bird Conservancy and Black Swamp Bird Conservancy were asked by LEEDCo to review a white paper on impacts to birds from the proposed project and to offer comments, which we did (see attached). We found many problems and were subsequently told that our comments were going to be given serious consideration and that modifications to the white paper would be made. Yet, a year and half later, none of that has happened.
- 2) The entire Central Basin of Lake Erie is designated a "Globally Important Bird Area" by National Audubon Society and Bird Conservation International, following a formal petition submitted by Black Swamp Bird Observatory and based on the number and variety of avifauna using the lake at various times of the year.
- 3) Lake Erie Charter Boat Association recently voted unanimously to oppose wind turbines in Lake Erie and on the near shore
- 4) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released their radar study of the southern shore of Lake Erie, documenting that vast numbers of birds and bats migrate along the shoreline and travel over the lake, often flying within the rotor swept area of commercial wind turbines (Horton et al. 2016). This study not only has verified the high risk to federally protected species in one of the world's great confluences of migratory birds and bats, it has also discredited industry-funded risk assessments based largely on daytime, visual surveys. Such surveys, as well as conventional radar studies, fail to measure the altitude at which birds and bats are flying and most of these migrants are traveling at night. These studies have verified what ABC, BSBO and others have been saying for some time: that the Great Lakes are not a good place for large-scale, commercial wind energy projects.

We understand that LEEDCo has now received a \$40 million grant from BOEM to continue work on this ill-conceived project. We sincerely hope that the Board will take into serious consideration the potential impacts that this project will have on our nation's ecologically important wildlife and hold LEEDCo and their European partners accountable.

The ecological services—pest control, pollination, and seed dispersal—that birds and bats provide are worth billions to the Canadian and U.S. economies (Sekercioglu, 2015, Sekercioglu et al. 2016). Bird watching also brings millions of dollars through travel and recreational equipment purchases (Kaufman 2016). Yet, many of North America's bird species are in precipitous decline, with over a third in need of concerted conservation action (North American Bird Conservation Initiative 2016).

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Hutchins, Ph.D.
Director, Bird Smart Wind Energy Campaign
American Bird Conservancy



Kim Kaufman
Executive Director
Black Swamp Bird Observatory

Cc: OPSB Board members

References

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