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**\$200,000 AVAILABLE IN 2006 FROM LAKE ERIE COMMISSION FOR SMALL
GRANT PROJECTS**

Grants are limited to no more than \$10,000 each

TOLEDO , OH – Projects that further the goals of the Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan and the recently announced Great Lakes Regional Collaboration will be eligible for \$200,000 in grants from the Ohio Lake Erie Commission during 2006.

These small grants, which will be awarded quarterly, are intended as seed money to test the feasibility of larger research efforts, for small demonstration implementation projects, technology transfer and public participation projects. Each is limited to no more than \$10,000. If project needs exceed that limit, applicants are encouraged to contact the commission at 419-245-2514 to discuss funding alternatives. The commission will not award large grants in 2006.

Small grant proposals are reviewed and selected at each quarterly commission meeting. Projects that address one or more of the 84 strategic actions of the Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan will receive consideration, as will projects directed toward immediate action items of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. Information about these action items, as well as guidelines for preparing a grant application, are available at the commission's web site, www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo .

Deadlines for submitting grant applications are six weeks prior to each quarterly meeting: February 1 for the March 15 meeting; May 3 for the June 7 meeting, August 2 for the September 6 meeting, and November 8 for the December 20 meeting.

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission is comprised of the directors of the departments of the environmental protection agency, natural resources, 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 of 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.

The Lake Erie Protection Fund is supported by Ohioans who purchase a Lake Erie license plate displaying either the Marblehead Lighthouse or Toledo Harbor Lighthouse. Both were designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond. During the last 12 years, the commission has raised \$8 million through the

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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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