

Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program

Fact Sheet: State Assistance Work Group

What is the role of the State Assistance Work Group?

One of the state incentives for local governments is the opportunity to work with state agencies through the State Assistance Work Group (SAWG). The State Assistance Work Group will be charged with assisting the Balanced Growth Watershed Planning Partnerships (WPPs) and participating local governments in identifying technical and financial resources that can support Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) and Priority Development Areas (PDAs). The state agencies will assist in identifying sources of support, providing agency guidance on utilizing support, and promoting awareness of the local WPP intentions within the agencies.

Which state agencies are currently represented on the State Assistance Work Group?

The agencies represented include the six member agencies of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission (Ohio Departments of Natural Resources, Development, Transportation, Agriculture, and Health, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency), along with the Ohio Water Development Authority. These members have prior knowledge and involvement in the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program and will be considered the chartering members. Federal agencies that provide funding for development and conservation projects, other state agencies, and appropriate institutional partners will also be invited as deemed appropriate by the chartering member state agencies.

What are the specific goals of the State Assistance Work Group?

- Help Watershed Planning Partnerships and local governments identify the most appropriate programs from the State Program Inventory that will support the PDAs and PCAs in the watershed.
- Provide the agencies with knowledge and familiarity with each Balanced Growth Watershed Plan and the local development and conservation goals.
- Evaluate the impact of proposed rule changes by the state agencies and provide comments that best incorporate balanced growth considerations as new rules or rule revisions are developed. Review funding priorities to provide suggestions on how they can be supportive of Balanced Growth.
- Identify any additional programmatic resources or policy changes that will help align state programs and polices with Balanced Growth Watershed Plans.
- Develop public information resources (fact sheets and a website) to assist Watershed Planning Partnerships.