

For Immediate Release
December 5, 2013

Ohio Lake Erie Commission to Hold December Quarterly Meeting in Columbus

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) will hold its quarterly meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013, at 1:30 p.m. at the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts – Executive Conference and Training Center, 77 S. High St., Columbus.

The Ohio Department of Transportation will present *Access Ohio 2040*, Ohio's updated, long-range transportation plan. The vision for Ohio's future transportation system and its implications for the Lake Erie region will be discussed. In addition, there will be an update about the recently released Ohio Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force II report.

The commission was recently awarded a \$500,000 U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to study the causes of harmful algal blooms and low oxygen levels in Lake Erie. This project involves four universities and an environmental modeling consulting firm. Planned project outcomes will be discussed.

OLEC oversees Ohio's Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is a source of grant money 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 Lake Erie life ring or the Marblehead Lighthouse designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond.

All OLEC meetings are open to the public and include reports from the member state agencies and advisory committees followed by a public comment period. Organizations and citizens are encouraged to attend.

OLEC 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 director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the state departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, Health, Development and Agriculture.

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