OHIO COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY 37 – OFFSHORE MINERAL EXTRACTION

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF OHIO TO PROVIDE FOR AND REGULATE THE EXTRACTION OF MINERALS AND OTHER SUBSTANCES FROM AND FROM UNDER THE BED OF LAKE ERIE, THROUGH THE ISSUANCE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES MINERAL LEASES AND PERMITS, TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE, AND TO MINIMIZE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, INCLUDING ADVERSE IMPACTS ON LITTORAL OWNERS' RIGHTS (O.R.C. 1505.07).

Authorities and Administration

Pursuant to O.R.C. 1505.07, no person shall remove sand, gravel, stone or other minerals or other substances from or from under the bed of Lake Erie without obtaining a lease or permit from the Director of ODNR. Issuance of any lease by the Director of ODNR requires the additional approval of the Director of Ohio EPA, the Attorney General and the Governor. The issuance of an offshore extraction lease is granted on either a rental or royalty basis, whichever is deemed best for the state. All monies derived from the granting of these leases are deposited into a special revenue account administered by ODNR for the protection of Lake Erie shores and waters; investigation and prevention of erosion; the planning, development, and construction of facilities for recreational use of Lake Erie; preparation of the state shore erosion plan under O.R.C. 1507.10; and state administration of Lake Erie coastal erosion areas under O.R.C. 1506.06 and 1506.07 (O.R.C. 1507.05). All data pertaining to the origin, distribution, extent, use and valuation of offshore minerals, and other offshore substances or resources are collected, analyzed, and interpreted by the Division of Geological Survey (O.R.C. 1505.01). The director may, in accordance with O.R.C. Chapter 119, promulgate rules for the implementation of the aforementioned lease activities (O.R.C. 1505.07).

O.R.C. 1505.07 requires that any taking or removal must be within "fixed boundaries that do not conflict with the rights of littoral owners."

Offshore sand and gravel extraction is currently limited to three designated areas: Vermilion-Lorain Inner, Vermilion-Lorain Outer, and Fairport. Extraction areas are designated based upon sufficient distance from the shoreline to avert erosion damage. ODNR continues explorations for sand and gravel areas that may be economically viable now and in the future. Dredge operators must comply with all state and federal water quality regulations during the extraction process.

The extraction of oil and natural gas from under Lake Erie is also included under this lease requirement. See Policy 36 for discussion of this extraction activity.

The construction or maintenance of channels, jetties, docks, boating facilities, or other projects along Lake Erie and its bays often requires removal of sand and gravel resources from the littoral zone. It is ODNR's policy that sand and gravel be returned to the littoral zone downdrift of a project to reduce erosion by nourishing and restoring beaches downdrift of the project site. This requirement is applied to both public and private projects and is enforced through special conditions developed in submerged lands leases (O.R.C. 1506.11) and through the Section 401 Water Quality Certification process.