# OHIO COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ISSUE AREA: PORTS AND SHORE AREA DEVELOPMENT

## Uses Subject to Management

- Activities involving the development of submerged lands of Lake Erie.
- Activities involving the dredging and disposal of dredged materials.
- Activities affecting the development of the shore and nearshore waters.
- Activities involving port development, maintenance and expansion.

### Dredging

Large vessels traveling the Great Lakes require harbor depths of 28 feet below low water datum. Keeping Ohio's commercial and recreational harbors open to these vessels requires annual dredging by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Dredging involves large quantities of materials that are very costly to remove and may pose environmental problems. Polluted materials must be disposed at approved upland sites or in confined disposal facilities. These facilities are expensive and occupy valuable nearshore habitat. Improved dredging techniques and new methodology for the disposal of dredge materials is vital to the shipping industry.

## Residential Development

Lakeshore access, expansive views and other aesthetic considerations make the shore area a desirable place to live. Residential development, primarily single family housing, occupies nearly 45 percent of the 262 miles of Lake Erie shore in Ohio. In some areas near Cleveland, high-rise apartment buildings have been built on the bluffs overlooking the Lake. Neighboring communities face pressure from developers to rezone their lakeshores to allow for more condominiums and high-rise apartments. High-density housing drastically changes the shore's character, limits the options for its future use, and may create unforeseen environmental problems. Local decisions to redevelop the shore to provide high density housing must be considered carefully. Proper plans should be developed and implemented by local governments to reduce the effects of continued residential development on the Lake Erie shore.

#### **Industrial and Commercial Development**

A sound, viable and progressive economy is an essential element of the Lake Erie region. The commercial and industrial advantages provided by the lake's economic resources are important to the region and the state. A lakeshore location satisfies two basic industrial location criteria: economic shipping distance for major raw materials including iron ore, coal and limestone; and availability of a large-volume water supply for processing needs.

Approximately 10 percent of the shore is developed by industrial or commercial interests. Many of the lake's tributaries are also heavily developed. However, their harbors, which in the past have been almost exclusively areas of commercial and industrial development, are now undergoing urban waterfront development.

Some developments along the lakeshore are lake-dependent and require actual lakefront access to operate. These include commercial fishing, port facilities, certain mineral extraction industries, large boatworks, shipyards, and marinas. Other developments along Lake Erie require water, but not necessarily lakefront land, as an integral part of their operation. Electrical generating facilities and steel plants are examples of this second group of developments.

#### **Ports**

The availability of an inexpensive water-based transportation system has greatly influenced development of cities and industry along the Lake. Commercial ports along Ohio's Lake Erie shore provide a vital link in the state's transportation system and are vital to the local, regional and state economy. The major commercial ports are Ashtabula, Cleveland, Conneaut, Fairport Harbor, Huron, Lorain, Sandusky and Toledo. Major commodities are coal, iron ore, grain, fertilizers, limestone, sand, gravel, salt and stone. A declining industrial base has hurt the ports, yet they have kept pace by diversifying their cargos and seeking new business. Innovative thinking and continued port development should maintain the flow of goods in the coastal area.