OHIO COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
POLICY 36 – OIL AND NATURAL GAS DRILLING

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF OHIO TO PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELFARE AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND TO ASSURE WISE MANAGEMENT BY:

A. REGULATING OIL AND GAS DRILLING ONSHORE BY REQUIRING A PERMIT TO DRILL FROM ODNR (O.R.C. 1509.05); AND

B. DISCOURAGING OFFSHORE OIL AND NATURAL GAS DRILLING IN OHIO WATERS OF LAKE ERIE.

Authorities and Administration

A. ODNR, Division of Mineral Resources Management (DMRM), requires a permit for any person planning to drill a new well, drill an existing well deeper, reopen a well, convert a well to any use other than its original purpose, plug a well to a source of supply different from the existing pool, or plug and abandon a well (O.R.C. 1509.05 and 1509.13). When any well is to be abandoned, it shall be plugged in accordance with a method of plugging adopted by rule by the Chief of DMRM. The Chief also administers a permit program for subsurface injection solution (salt) mining and brine disposal activities pursuant to O.R.C. 1509.22.

Drilling and operation rules cover the criteria for permit issuance, disposal of brine and other oil field wastes, secondary recovery operations, solution mining of minerals, safety practices for drilling and operations of wells, pipeline installation, and plugging of wells (O.A.C. 1501:9-1, 1501:9-3, 1501:9-5, 1501:9-7, 1501:9-9, 1501:9-10, and 1501:9-11). Permit regulations provide criteria for a surety bond, spacing of wells, location of wells with reference to inhabited dwellings and public rights of way, and prevention of contamination and pollution.

B. The Governor of Ohio and the other Great Lakes states governors agreed to "A Statement of Principle Against Oil Drilling in the Great Lakes" that opposed drilling for oil in the waters of the Great Lakes and the connecting channels. The statement declares the states' shared stewardship of and intent to protect Great Lakes water quality and its dependent fishery, wildlife resources, drinking water, and recreational, transportation, business, and agricultural uses.

The drilling permit (O.R.C. 1509.05), the mineral lease (O.R.C. 1505.07) and the submerged lands lease (O.R.C. 1506.11) are existing tools to implement this policy. By opposing drilling "in the waters of the Great Lakes," the statement would not affect directional drilling; no such drilling currently is occurring in Ohio's portion of the Lake Erie basin. Ohio's statutes and rules governing these permits and leases do not, however, specifically contain conditions or criteria in this regard and therefore would allow such drilling.