

Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program State Incentives for Local Governments

What is the fundamental principle to guide state agencies under the Balanced Growth Program?

If local governments can agree on areas within a watershed where development is to be encouraged (PDAs) and areas where conservation activities are to be promoted (PCAs), the State of Ohio will support those decisions by aligning state programs to support those decisions, and conversely will not utilize state programs to violate those locally based decisions.

What are the objectives of the state incentives package?

- Promote economically and environmentally sound watershed-based planning by local governments
- Provide incentives for development in PDAs
- Promote redevelopment in PDAs
- Provide incentives to promote conservation activities in PCAs

What is included in the state incentive package for local governments?

- **State Program Inventory** – a list of all state programs and funding sources that could be used to support conservation in the PCAs and development or re-development in the PDAs.
- Opportunity to work with state agencies through the **State Assistance Work Group** – this group is charged with assisting the participating local governments in identifying and obtaining technical and financial resources that can be used to support PCAs and PDAs.
- **Streamlining and Predictability** – the State Assistance Work Group will develop methods to provide more advance predictability and streamlining for site-related decisions in PCAs and PDAs.
- **Financial and Technical Special Incentives** – a list of these special incentives is provided in the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Strategy. The special incentives include specific grant and technical assistance programs that offer added consideration for projects that are within PCAs and PDAs.



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Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program 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. 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 PDA and PCA areas 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 policies with Balanced Growth Watershed Plans.
- Develop public information resources (fact sheets and websites) to assist Watershed Planning Partnerships.



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Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program Financial and Technical Special Incentives

What are Financial and Technical Special Incentives?

These include existing funding sources and programs that have incorporated Balanced Growth-specific considerations in their applications processes.

How will the Financial and Technical Special Incentives be applied?

The Financial and Technical Special Incentives will be available in watersheds that have a state endorsed Balanced Growth Plan or in some cases are working on a plan. They are generally in the form of additional consideration (extra priority ranking, interest rate discounts, or special support) for funding applications that will implement specific activities in PDAs or PCAs. There are also special considerations for technical assistance from the state in local communities that are participating in Watershed Planning Partnerships who have completed an endorsed Balanced Growth Watershed Plan.

What is included in the Financial and Technical Special Incentives?

The following table is a short summary of what is offered as special incentives in Balanced Growth Watersheds. Complete descriptions of the programs, including the sponsoring agency and contact information, are contained in the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Strategy dated December 12, 2007 and in the State Program Inventory appendix to the Strategy.

Special Incentives Summary Table

Coastal Management Assistance Grant Program	Technical and/or financial support for Balanced Growth Plan or proposed Projects in PCAs.
Watershed Coordinator Grant Program	Additional points to applicants that indicate they have or are working on a Balanced Growth Plan or proposed projects in PCAs.
Recycling Market Development Grant Program	
Scrap Tire Grant Program	
Land & Water Conservation Fund Program	
Nature Works Program	
Clean Ohio Trails Program	
Recreational Trails Program	
Streams & Storm Water Program	Prioritize staff resources toward watersheds with endorsed Watershed Balanced Growth Plans.
Ohio Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	Set aside an undetermined amount of funds from each fiscal year allocation of \$1 million toward PCAs, for

	eligible practices within eligible agricultural land use.
Grassland Restoration Program	Provide additional points to applicants working on a Balanced Growth Plan or who propose priority projects in a focus area.
Wetland Restoration Program	
Ohio Agricultural Easement Donation Program	Align for protection of PCAs.
Agricultural Security Area	
Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program	Modify to support PCAs.
Water Pollution Control Loan Fund	Align to support PCAs and PDAs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for best water quality management practices for land development • Funding for municipal storm water best management practices • Funding for land and water conservation and restoration actions with water quality benefits. Additional priority points for qualifying Balanced Growth projects
Fresh Water Loan Group	Additional ½ percent discount on loans.
Community Assistance Loan Program	
Lake Erie Protection Fund	Priority for projects to develop and implement Balanced Growth watershed plans.
National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System	Discounts to flood insurance premium rates on flood insurance policies sold for properties within the community.
Dam Safety Linked Deposit Program	Below market rate loans for the removal of dams.
Dam Safety Loan Program	
Floodplain Mgmt. Technical Assistance	FEMA approved flood mitigation plans result in local community eligibility for a full array of pre- and post-disaster mitigation funds and assistance. Inclusion of strategies and actions to address flood risk and protect floodplain resources in Balanced Growth Plans can easily be incorporated into mitigation plans.
Dam Safety Technical Assistance	
Statewide Geologic Mapping	Technical geological information in support of Balanced Growth Plan.
Ohio Coastal Erosion Area Remapping	
Side-scan Sonar Substrate Mapping	
166 Direct Loan Program	Strongly encouraged for businesses planning to expand within Priority Development Areas (PDAs).
Rapid Outreach Grant	
Roadwork Development (629) Account	
Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit	Tax credit would be strongly encouraged for businesses planning to expand within Priority Development Areas (PDAs).
208 Planning (aka State Water Quality Management Plan)	Provides a mechanism to strengthen local land use and sewer infrastructure planning; OEPA review of

	wastewater discharge permits and sewer PTIs in PDAs. "Specific prescriptions" regarding wastewater treatment and disposal options would be binding upon OEPA in permitting actions; permits must be consistent with approved 208 plans.
Clean Water Act Section 319 Implementation Grants Program	OEPA provides additional scoring/credit for projects that are proposed in watersheds where a Balanced Growth Plan has been completed.
Water Supply Revolving Account	Utilize priority point system for potential loan projects to recognize consistency with balanced growth plans.
Small City Program	Participating in and meeting the Balanced Growth Initiative will be criteria that goes into selection of projects.
Transportation Enhancements	



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Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program State Program Inventory

How will the State Program Inventory help the Watershed Planning Partnerships?

This inventory is intended to be a resource for Watershed Planning Partnerships to help identify programs that will support conservation in Priority Conservation Areas and development or re-development in Priority Development Areas. These are existing state programs that have been identified as specifically impacting land use change decisions. The intent is that the state will consider the existence of PCAs and PDAs in the use of these programs to support land use planning and land use change that is beneficial to the local communities and to Lake Erie as outlined in the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan.

How is the State Program Inventory presented?

The State Program Inventory is a list of state programs compiled by whether or not they will support Priority Conservation Areas or Priority Development Areas. The list is structured by conservation or development effect, and then by three factors: infrastructure, direct site impact, and planning/technical assistance services. It is currently contained as an appendix in the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Strategy, which was approved in an updated version by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission on December 12, 2007.

What is included in the State Program Inventory?

- **Conservation Programs** – there are a total of 45 state programs and funding sources in the Inventory that could be used to support conservation in the PCAs. This includes one program for Metro Park infrastructure, 30 that are site specific (for example, site acquisition or restoration), and 14 for services (such as forestry or watershed action plan technical assistance).
- **Development Programs** – there are a total of 109 state programs and funding sources in the Inventory that could be used to support development or re-development in the PDAs. This includes 33 programs for infrastructure (primarily transportation and water, through ODOT, OWDA, and OEPA), 65 that are site specific (for example, various community development programs), and 11 for services (such as minority business assistance or planning programs).

It should be noted that a few programs appear on both lists, since they could be used to support either conservation or development (for example, the ODNR – Division of Soil & Water Conservation, Streams and Storm Water Program serves a range of purposes).



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Lake Erie Balanced Growth Program Streamlining and Predictability Incentives

Why would streamlining and predictability of state regulatory programs be an incentive?

The unpredictability and long time frame typically needed to secure permits presents significant challenges to successful development practice. Extended permit review periods and conflicting information across regulatory agencies jeopardizes private developer ability to finance projects reasonably and bring projects to completion. Therefore, state efforts to streamline these processes and make them more predictable would serve as an incentive for private developers and local communities if they could anticipate streamlined, predictable decision making to encourage development or redevelopment in the PDAs and consistently greater levels of difficulty for equivalent projects in PCAs.

Which state regulations can be streamlined and made more predictable?

- A rules package for **stream mitigation, wetland mitigation, and 401 certification** is in the process of being developed by OEPA. Development of these rules should provide improvements to predictability and timeliness in the permitting process.
- Ohio EPA is in the process of developing and issuing **general NPDES permits** for a variety of discharges in order to increase efficiency and to help make it easier for various dischargers to obtain an NPDES permit.
- Programs that require **consistency** between federal, state or local actions and specifically adopted plans (e.g. Ohio Coastal Management Program and Section 208 Plans) are another method that Watershed Planning Partnerships and local governments can use to assure that state and federal actions are consistent with their Watershed Balanced Growth Plans. Programs that depend upon local recommendations (e.g. ODOT in MPO areas) will reference consistency with a locally adopted and state endorsed Watershed Balanced Growth Plan where such a plan has been completed.
- The State Assistance Work Group will look at **additional methods** to provide more advance predictability pertaining to site-related decisions. While these regulatory changes will generally be available statewide, they also will address the need for state regulatory streamlining and predictability in Balanced Growth Watersheds.



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