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**OAQDA Approves Grants to Battelle, ODNR for Expansive Study
Of Deep Geologic Formations in Eastern Ohio**
Action termed "necessary next step" in planning for carbon dioxide sequestration

COLUMBUS – With likely federal regulation of carbon dioxide emissions on the horizon, the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) took action at its May meeting to advance the state's understanding of the suitability of its deep geology for the sequestration of CO₂. Sequestration is widely viewed as a leading option for disposing of CO₂ emitted by coal-based power plants and other industrial facilities.

OAQDA approved a grant from its Ohio Coal Development Office (OCDO) program for Battelle of up to \$2,209,409 and a separate OCDO grant to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) of up to \$790,591. The funds are to be used for the 18-month project "Conducting Research to Better Define the Sequestration Options in Eastern Ohio and the Appalachian Basin."

"Ohio must be prepared to dispose of carbon dioxide in environmentally and economically suitable ways because federal carbon regulations almost certainly are coming. OAQDA's approval of these funds is a continuation of our long-standing support of the Midwest Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnership (MRCSP), which is leading the study and evaluation of sequestration in our region," said Mark R. Shanahan, OAQDA executive director and the Governor's energy advisor.

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Larry Wickstrom, state geologist and chief of ODNR's Division of Geological Survey, said that "we really don't have a thorough understanding of the deep geology of eastern Ohio, which is as much as 13,500 feet in total thickness and probably contains a number of 'reservoirs' that would be ideal for CO₂ sequestration. This project is the necessary next step in the state's planning process for dealing with likely carbon constraints."

The MRCSP is a group of universities, state geological surveys and other private and public sector partners whose purpose is to assess the technical potential, economic viability and public acceptability of carbon sequestration within its region. Its member states include Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Battelle serves as lead agency for MRCSP, and Ohio's Division of Geological Survey coordinates the work of all participating state surveys.

According to Battelle's David Ball, manager of the MRCSP, a key goal of the project will be to "piggyback" with deep wells now being planned for drilling in eastern Ohio by the oil and gas industries.

"Up to 30 percent of the funds in this project will be used to conduct our own studies of the rock formations through which these industries already are planning to drill new wells. This 'piggyback' method is a 'win' for taxpayers, who do not have to foot the bill for drilling these wells. It's a 'win' for us, because we will be securing massive amounts of new data on Ohio's deep geology that we simply do not have today. Industry will also benefit by gaining a better understanding of its own wells," Ball said.

Shanahan said that no CO₂ sequestration will take place under the approved project. He said the long-term goal of the project is to bring together a consortium of public and private stakeholders for the preparation of a multi-year plan to secure an even more detailed evaluation of eastern Ohio's CO₂ sequestration potential.

The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) is a non-regulatory government agency created to help Ohio businesses comply with clean air regulations. Through its Ohio Coal Development Office, OAQDA also oversees the State of Ohio's coal research, development and technology deployment efforts. Since its creation in 1970, the Authority has provided technical and financial help to hundreds of large and small Ohio businesses, awarding more than \$7 billion to finance air quality projects. In addition, the OAQDA executive director was appointed the Governor's energy advisor in January 2007. Subsequently, in 2008, OAQDA was named as administering authority for the \$150 million Advanced Energy Job Stimulus Program. For more information about OAQDA and its services, please visit its web site at www.ohioairquality.org.