For Immediate Release:  June 2, 2010

Contact: Sandy Bihn, Western Lake Erie WATERKEEPERS Association, (419) 691-3788, (419) 367-1691 (cell)

Nachy Kanfer, Sierra Club, 614-625-3894 (cell)

Kristy Meyer, Ohio Environmental Council, (614) 487-7506, (614)638-8948 (cell)

Frank Reynolds, (419) 698-8786, (419) 467-9734 (cell)

Paul Pacholski, Lake Erie Charter Boat Association, (419) 340-0076

Rick Graham, Izaak Walton League of America- Ohio Division, (419) 465-2283

Shannon Fisk, Natural Resources Defense Council, (312) 651-7904

Sandy Buchan, Ohio Citizen Action, (216) 861-5200

**Bay Shore Coal Plant Linked to Economic Damage in Ohio**

***Facility causes $30 million of annual economic damage regionally, according to new study***

**Oregon, OH:** Sport and Commercial anglers, boaters, local residents, and citizen groups released an economic study today that calculates the FirstEnergy Bay Shore coal plant costs Ohio $29.7 million every year in economic damage by destroying fish populations that would otherwise be used by Ohioans for recreation or commercial sale.

The conservative $29.7 million estimate was for damage to fish only, and did not include estimates of damage from other uses such as hunting or bird-watching, both of which contribute to the state’s economy as well. The study used FirstEnergy’s own numbers for how many fish are killed.

Sandy Bihn, a member of Oregon City Council and Executive Director of the Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association, said the report methodically demonstrated a central necessity: the installation of cooling towers at the Bay Shore plant, which would reduce fish kills by 95 percent.

“We now know that the estimated $100 million cost of installing cooling towers is economically justified by the annual $29.7 million economic loss from the fish kills,” Bihn said. “Ohio EPA needs to require Bay Shore to install cooling towers to reduce the millions of fish – and billions of larval fish – killed each year.”

Commercial fishermen in the Toledo area also praised the report, saying the coal plant’s vast intake of 650 million gallons of water every day for cooling purposes robs them of their livelihoods.

“I have lived and worked within one half mile of the Bay Shore plant starting 17 years before it was built in 1951, and ever since,” said Frank Reynolds, a local resident and commercial fisherman, in comments to the Ohio EPA. “The Bay Shore power plant has killed fish and degraded the Maumee Bay waters, spawning grounds, nursery and general food supply.”

The report was funded by several citizen and environmental groups, who submitted official comments yesterday to Ohio EPA on its draft of a wastewater discharge renewal permit for the Bay Shore facility.

“The Bay Shore plant is a fish-killing machine that serves as yet another reminder that coal is dirty,” said Shannon Fisk, senior attorney for the Midwest Office of the Natural Resources Defense Council. “It is far past time for FirstEnergy to comply with the Clean Water Act by installing the cooling towers that are needed to vastly reduce this massive fish kill problem and to minimize the thermal impacts of the plant on Maumee Bay.”

“The Ohio EPA is about to grant a license to kill,” said Kristy Meyer, Director of Agriculture and Clean Water Programs at the Ohio Environmental Council. “FirstEnergy’s own consultants state that the annual effectiveness of the reverse louvers will be approximately 3.9% effective – and when a fine mesh screen is added behind the plywood louvers to reduce fish entrainment, the effectiveness decreases even more. The consensus is in: the reverse louvers will not work. The Ohio EPA should reject this application to kill and require cooling towers.”

“If we’ve learned anything from the BP disaster in the Gulf, it’s that dirty energy like oil and coal are incompatible with clean water and our nation’s fishing and tourism industries,” said Nachy Kanfer, a representative of Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign in Ohio. “The nation is moving beyond coal, and Ohio must do the same.”

The Bay Shore plant, along with three other FirstEnergy-owned plants along the shore of Lake Erie, is also under a Notice of Violation from the United States Environmental Protection Agency for alleged violations of the Clean Air Act.

The Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association, together with the citizen and environmental groups who collaborated to fund the economic study, has arranged for a boat on Friday at 12pm for members of the media to view first-hand why the Bay Shore plant kills so many fish and what FirstEnergy must do to address the problem. Space on the boat is limited; contact Sandy Bihn for details and to RVSP.

*# # #*