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Sam Cunningham; Waukegan's 40<sup>th</sup> Mayor

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March 29, 2024

To: Don Brown

Re: Public Comment: AS 2021-03: Adjusted Standard for the Waukegan Station

I write to you as a longtime resident of the City of Waukegan, a public servant and certainly a Waukegan Mayor, but there is another hat I don't think people necessarily know — I was the inaugural Chairman of the Mayor's Water Equity Commission for the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. What does that mean? We had the responsibility of monitoring our Great Lakes. Most people don't know our Great Lakes make up 20 percent of the world's freshwater and roughly 80 to 90 percent of our United States freshwater. What does that mean as it relates to what NRG on a practical standpoint should be doing?

Protecting. It should be protecting the greatest resource probably in the world. We have it right here in Waukegan along this shoreline.

Some call it environmental injustice. Some say NRG is preying on Blacks and Latinos, low-income, working-class people. I say they have a professional corporate responsibility to make sure that anything they have done to harm this community, to get rid of it. Practical people do those things.

As a little boy who was reared in Waukegan by my mother and this community, and then to have grown up to be the Alderman and Mayor of my hometown, I would have never thought I would be here today writing to you. And as the Mayor, I've disagreed with some of our neighbors. In the society that we live in, that is what we do; but on this issue here, this very issue, about drinking water, one of the most precious aspects of the world, there shouldn't be a debate.

There shouldn't be an argument whether it be from the company or our residents. It should all be one unified effort to remove ALL the coal ash.

Don, please make NRG remove the coal ash from our beach. The EPA has spoken and certainly the community has spoken. Now it is up to you. What do practical people do, not politicians, not corporate riaders, but practical people who sit on these boards? They do what's in the best interest of our city, county, country, and then we move on.

So I ask you, along with the Environmental Protection Agency, certainly along with our environmental advocates, and most importantly, with the residents, business, and other community members, it is time to do what all of you will do from a practical standpoint. I trust that your decision will be in favor not just of Waukegan but of this great state.

As always, thank you for your service and thank you to all those neighbors who have expressed their interest in what is best for our state, county, and city and protecting the two most valuable resources on the face of this Earth—our water and people.

Take care. God bless.

Sam Cunningham