

April 8, 2008

John Therriault, Assistant Clerk
Illinois Pollution Control Board
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 11-500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

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STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

PC# 22

RE: Rule Making R08-009

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

I am writing to express my support for the recommended water quality standard improvements proposed by the Illinois EPA for the Chicago Area Waterways (CAWS) and Lower Des Plaines River as rule making R08-009.

These recommended changes are greatly needed and long overdue, coming after five years of study on the CAWS and seven on the Lower Des Plaines. The IEPA has invested considerable staff time and effort into this project and I support the changes the agency recommends.

As a Chicagoan, hiker, birdwatcher, bicyclist and kayaker, I think it is essential that:

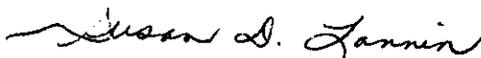
- The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District disinfect sewage treatment plant effluent to kill bacteria and protect public health and
- Temperature and dissolved oxygen standards be implemented to protect fish and help them flourish.

The entire CAWS system and its uses have changed dramatically over the years. The water, once defiled with raw sewage, livestock waste, and industrial pollutants, has undergone major improvements through the leadership of agencies like the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. Public access has increased considerably as local governments incorporated these rivers into their master planning. The City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, and suburbs like Blue Island and Skokie have invested millions of dollars into river access for crewing, fishing, and paddling. Much work has been done to improve habitat and control pollution. Bluegill, large-mouth bass, and yellow perch are three of the nearly 70 species of fish that now populate the Chicago River system, once home to under 10 species. This is a clear sign of the progress that has been made in cleaning the CAWS.

Because it has taken nearly two decades for a review like this to come, I believe we must seize this opportunity to do what is right to benefit future generations. We must strive to meet the intent of the Clean Water Act for fishable, swimmable waters. Disinfection of wastewater treatment effluent and the implementation of the rest of the Illinois EPA's recommendations are vital, in order to maximize the **Chicago River's future as a recreational, natural, and economic resource for Chicago and the region.**

Thank you for accepting these comments into your public record.

Sincerely,



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