

June 16, 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

RE: Rule Making R08-009

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

I am writing to request that you adopt 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.

As a kayaker I have paddled the North Shore Channel, Jackson Park and other waters around Chicago. At times the water really stinks. I am also a site captain for the Friends of the Chicago River I am building a trail along the river in Northbrook. Thus, I think it is critical that:

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

Over the years, the entire watershed system has changed dramatically. The water, once full of raw sewage and industrial filth, has vastly improved through the leadership of agencies like the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District with its Tunnel and Reservoir Plan. 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 poured millions into river access for paddling, fishing, and rowing. Much work has been done to improve river habitat and to control pollution. Thus, the number of fish species has increased from under 10 to nearly 70, including game fish favorites like large-mouth bass, bluegill and yellow perch.

We now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to continue our momentum by supporting the Illinois EPA recommendations so we can make the next significant improvement in our watersheds. To continue to improve our region's recreational, natural and economic resources we must implement the Illinois EPA's recommendations including effluent disinfection.

Thank you,



Douglas Gerleman
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