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August 2, 2008

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AUG 04 2008

STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

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

RE: Rule Making R08-009

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

Please support 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.

I canoe on the river, bike along the river, and take walks along the river. More importantly, I am a citizen of Chicago and feel responsible to improve the quality of the river and all our water systems for our children, future residents, Olympic visitors, plants and animals, etc. These changes are long overdue. Please support the Illinois EPA's effort and approve the changes.

I think it is critical 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.

Over the years, the entire CAWS 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 and 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 crew. And so much work has been done to improve habitat and control pollution that in the Chicago River system, species of fish have climbed from under 10 to nearly 70, including game fish favorites like large-mouth bass and bluegill and yellow perch.

A review like this only comes along every 20 years, so right now we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to continue our momentum by supporting the Illinois EPA recommendations so we can make the next quantum leap forward in water quality. Disinfection and the rest of the Illinois EPA's recommendations are essential.

Water resources are more important than ever. As a society it is our obligation to ensure that we work to achieve the highest potential for shared resources, including and especially water. And as stewards of these natural resources, we should not be seeking the minimum in improvement, but the maximum.

Best regards,


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