

BEFORE THE ILLINOIS POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
)  
WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND )  
EFFLUENT LIMITATIONS FOR THE ) R08-9  
CHICAGO AREA WATERWAY SYSTEM ) (Rulemaking – Water)  
AND THE LOWER DES PLAINES RIVER: )  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO 35 ILL. )  
Adm. Code Parts 301, 302, 303, and 304 )

**NOTICE OF FILING**

To:

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Illinois Pollution Control Board  
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Persons included on the attached  
**SERVICE LIST**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that I have today filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Pollution Control Board **PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF THOMAS J. BAMONTE** on behalf of Environmental Groups, Environmental Law and Policy Center, Natural Resources Defense Council, Prairie Rivers Network, Sierra Club – Illinois Chapter, Friends of the Chicago River, and Openlands, a copy of which is herewith served upon you.

Respectfully Submitted,



Albert Ettinger  
Senior Staff Attorney  
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DATED: August 4, 2008

BEFORE THE ILLINOIS POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

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WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND )  
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ADM. CODE PARTS 301, 302, 303, AND 304. )

**Testimony of Thomas J. Bamonte**  
**Chicago Area Sea Kayakers Association (CASKA)**  
(August 4, 2008)

I, Thomas J. Bamonte, offer the following testimony.

I am the President of the Chicago Area Sea Kayakers Association (CASKA) (caska.org) and have kayaked extensively in the Chicago area for the past seven years. I have been certified as a kayaking instructor by the American Canoe Association and have observed kayakers of all skill levels in a wide variety of water conditions and kayaks.

I live in the Bucktown area in the City of Chicago and regularly paddle in the Chicago River system ("River"). See <http://caskaorg.typepad.com/caska/2007/10/trip-report-chi.html>

I am familiar from personal experience and observation the extent of the contact between kayakers and the water in which they are paddling.

Kayaks by design put the paddler in close proximity to the water. Typically there is less than a foot between the surface of the water and the rim of the open cockpit in the kayak. In addition,

kayaks typically are propelled through the water through the use of two-bladed paddles. On each stroke one paddle is in the water and the other is elevated at or above eye level. As a result water repeatedly flows down the paddle shaft to the hands of the paddler.

Water that drips off the paddle shaft lands in the lap and on the exposed legs of the paddler. For this reason, many kayakers wear a sprayskirt--a sheet of fabric or neoprene that wraps around the kayaker's midsection and around the rim of the cockpit and seals the kayaker into the kayak.

Sprayskirts do not, however, reduce the amount of water that comes off the paddle shaft to the paddlers' hands. When a seated kayaker breaks the sprayskirt seal around the cockpit rim, water that has pooled in the sprayskirt will spill on the lap and legs of the kayaker. In addition, when paddlers exit their kayaks their sprayskirts typically hang around their bodies, dripping water on their feet and legs. Removing a sprayskirt involves touching fabric wet from the River. If the paddler removes their sprayskirt over their head, there is a good chance of water coming in contact with the paddler's eyes. Also, kayakers typically put their hands in direct contact with the water while paddling. This is because paddle shafts are relatively short and kayaks are low in the water. Quite often at the end of a stroke, when the paddle blade is deep in the water, some or all of the paddler's hand gripping the shaft will be in the water. At a minimum, River water splashes on the paddler's hands as their hands graze the water's surface.

Paddlers frequently get sprayed with water while paddling, even in relatively calm water like that found in the River. The normal process of inserting and then removing paddles from the water can kick up unexpected splashes that result in water spraying into the paddler's face, eyes, body

and extremities. Strong winds exacerbate such splashes and make bodily contact with water much more likely. Such winds also blow water from the paddle shaft into the paddler's face.

Even when sprayskirts are used, kayaks typically take on water through minor leaks in both the sprayskirt and the kayak itself. In addition, the kayaker will bring water into the kayak with their feet when entering and exiting the kayak. Kayakers have direct contact with this accumulated water in their kayak, primarily through their feet and lower extremities. They regularly use sponges to rid their kayaks of excess water. In the process of sopping up water and squeezing sponges kayakers come in contact with water.

Paddlers also have frequent direct contact with the water when they enter and exit their kayaks. To position their kayaks in the water at the launch site kayakers often will have to walk in the water. They typically get in their kayaks by standing in the water and then using special techniques to get in their cockpits. To launch, kayakers will sometimes use their hands under the water to push off against the bottom and scoot the kayak to deeper water. Landing is just the reverse and typically involves significant direct contact with the water as well.

After landing, kayaks need to be wiped off, lugged to a nearby car and loaded. During each of these processes, the paddler comes into contact with River water that has accumulated on and in the kayak. Likewise, kayakers come into contact with water that has accumulated on clothing and gear. Paddle jackets, lifejackets and wetsuits, for example, often get covered with water. Pieces of equipment like pumps, camera boxes, and drybags that are lashed to the deck of a

kayak or stored on the floor of the cockpit are exposed to water. Kayakers touch this water each time they use or unload this equipment.

Based on my personal experience and observations, it is evident that kayakers will have extensive direct (e.g., hand in water) and secondary (e.g., water on gear) contact with River water in even the most ordinary paddle. This applies for kayakers of all skill levels in all kinds of kayaks and in all kinds of conditions.

Sometimes, however, kayaking results in full-body immersion. Kayaks are inherently "tippy" due to their narrow beam and other hull design characteristics. This makes capsizes and full body immersion much more frequent in kayaks than in other kinds of watercraft. Common kayaking related spills and capsizes include:

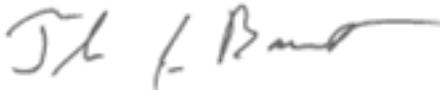
- Tripping and falling in the water at the launch/landing site while maneuvering a kayak to be in a good position to enter/exit the kayak.
  
- Tipping over while trying to enter/exit the kayak. Getting in and out of a kayak is a surprisingly difficult task for many people, especially when accessing the kayak from a significantly higher dock. Kayakers will slip into the water while doing this maneuver or, at a minimum, will flail around and splash in the water while recovering their balance.
  
- Capsizes occur while underway through inattention and inexperience. An unexpected boat wake or collision with another kayak can result in loss of balance and capsizes.

Experienced kayakers commonly execute a roll to recover from capsizes. This results in full immersion of the kayaker, who executes a roll while hanging upside down in the water under the kayak. Less experienced paddlers will exit their kayaks upon capsizes. This results in the paddler being immersed in the water for at least 1-5 minutes while executing a rescue technique to get back in their kayak. Any paddler who assists in the rescue by, for example, steadying a kayak while the "victim" crawls into the kayak, will get significant exposure to River water.

Unexpected capsizes are frequent enough that the kayaking community devotes much of its training resources teaching kayakers how to respond to such capsizes. Capsizes happen most frequently with novice paddlers, but no paddler is immune from them. It is important to note in this regard that the River is heavily used by novice paddlers because it is more protected than Lake Michigan waters.

As a kayaker, I hope that the IPCB will establish water quality standards that reflect the fact that recreational paddlers like kayakers have extensive bodily contact with River water each and every time they paddle in the River.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJ Bamonte', written in a cursive style.

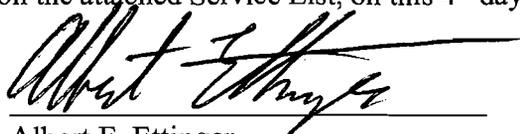
Thomas J. Bamonte  
President  
Chicago Area Sea Kayakers Association

Date: August 4, 2008

STATE OF ILLINOIS     )  
  )  
COUNTY OF COOK     )

**PROOF OF SERVICE**

I, Albert Ettinger, on oath state that I have served the attached **PRE-FILED TESTIMONY OF THOMAS J. BAMONTE** via U.S. Mail, first class postage prepaid, from 35 East Wacker Drive, Illinois to All Counsel of Record on the attached Service List, on this 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2008



Albert F. Ettinger  
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Subscribed and sworn to before me  
This 4<sup>th</sup> Day of August, 2008



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