

March 30, 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:

On behalf of the Chicago Rowing Foundation and the over 100-member LPJ Chicago rowing team, I am writing to express our 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 changes are long overdue and recommended only after five years of study on the CAWS and seven on the Lower Des Plaines. We should all support the Illinois EPA's effort and approve the changes.

From mid-February through early November our high school rowers spend **two+ hours, six days a week** rowing on the Chicago River from our boathouse at North Avenue up to Montrose and down to Ping Tom Park. For five months a year our adult team of rowers spends two+ hours a day, three days a week on the River. During the summer months our summer camp rowers spend 5 hours, five days a week on the River. We represent the most person-hours of any group spent on (and inches above) the Chicago River. We know the "state of the river" better than anyone, and we 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 our sport as well as for paddling and fishing.

But there is much more to be done.

There is no magic bullet or all-in-one measure that can eliminate water pollution but we know that if we want the Chicago River to continue to improve and serve our communities as a recreational, natural and economic resource, disinfection and the rest of the Illinois EPA's recommendations are essential.

We believe that as a society it is our moral 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.

Thank you,



Lynne Binzole
President

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