

SUBCOMMITTEES:
LABOR-HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES-EDUCATION
FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING
AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1302

May 13, 2008

Mr. 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 37

RE: Rule Making R08-009

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

I write 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. Indeed, these changes -- which would decrease bacteria and increase oxygen contents -- are long overdue.

Over the years, the water quality within the Chicago and Calumet Rivers watersheds, once full of raw sewage and industrial filth, has greatly improved. The rivers are now home to 70 species of fish, including large-mouth bass, bluegill and yellow perch. As a result, Chicago and several suburbs, including many in the 2nd Congressional district, have spent millions in enhancing river access for boating, crewing and fishing. In fact, many communities now include waterfront master plans that call for recreational, natural and economic investment along the rivers.

It has been more than 20 years since the EPA reviewed quality standards for these watersheds. Thus, we now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to adopt new and necessary environmental controls for water quality in this important region of the State.

I applaud the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for its past achievements in improving water quality. Moving forward, it is essential that we continue to protect and improve this valued and shared resource.

Sincerely,



Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress