

ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT LAKES

ENSURING A LIVING RESOURCE FOR ALL GENERATIONS

September 23, 2009

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Illinois Pollution Control Board
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 11-500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

PCT# 246

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CLERK'S OFFICE
SEP 24 2009
STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

RE: Rule Making R08-009

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

On behalf of the Alliance for the Great Lakes, representing 8,000 plus volunteers and members, a partner network of 100 plus other mission-based groups, and a prestigious board of more than 25 established and respected professionals in various private and public sectors, we are 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.

As a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of this region's watersheds and as users of the river, 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 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.

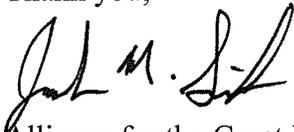
Because a review like this only comes along every 20 years, right now we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to continue our momentum by supporting the Illinois EPA recommendations so we can make the next quantum leap forward in water quality.

There is no magic bullet and 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.

I 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.

For further information on the case for disinfection, please refer to an Alliance for the Great Lakes report entitled, "Protecting Public Health, Caring for Chicago's Waters (An Agenda For Action)" 2007, found online at <http://www.greatlakes.org/Document.Doc?id=142>.

Thank you,



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