

November 23, 2008

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

RE: Rule Making R08-009

PC # 173

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CLERK'S OFFICE
NOV 25 2008
STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

On behalf of my husband, Fred Axley, and myself, I am writing 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 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 resident of Wilmette who lives close to the North Branch of the Chicago River and uses it for recreation, I think it is critical that:

- The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) 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.

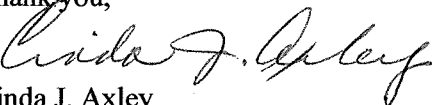
Over the years, the entire CAWS system has changed dramatically. The water, once full of raw sewage and industrial filth, has vastly improved through the leadership of agencies like the MWRD and its Tunnel and Reservoir Plan. Public access has increased considerably as local governments incorporated 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. The monetary costs of disinfection are, in a relevant sense, over time, not really very great. Incurring these costs, even in this economic climate, is the right thing to do.

There is no magic bullet and no single 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. Any improvements we make to the Chicago River will also improve the water quality downstream from Chicago.

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.

Thank you,



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