



July 15, 2015

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Room 3E446
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Secretary Darcy:

As the Leadership Commission of Great Rivers Chicago, we are writing to ask that you and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) work with us, the City of Chicago, Friends of the Chicago River and other partners to find a path forward for the Bubbly Creek restoration project. We ask that in the immediate term you delay or postpone the project, rather than cancel it.

The USACE has been studying Bubbly Creek since Congress authorized a Feasibility Study in July of 2005, with significant expenditure of local and federal funding. The sudden announcement that sediment contamination would end this decade-long, intensive process is disheartening. A decision to end the project, or restart another extended study, would be ill-advised and devastate the potential for this critical and historic reach of the Chicago River system to support healthy wildlife and increased recreational access.

Bubbly Creek is adjacent to several former manufactured gas facilities that are the source of the potential sediment contamination. Integrys has been operating under a consent decree since 2008 and has submitted plans for sediment sampling to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; sampling would begin this fall. If there is any contamination, they will remediate it, and the USACE Bubbly Creek Ecosystem Restoration project can begin promptly thereafter. Integrys has expressed a willingness to manage their project's implementation schedule in conjunction with the USACE effort. At present, it is unknown whether remediation will even be necessary. Canceling the USACE effort based on these unknowns is ill-advised and unnecessary.

Great Rivers Chicago was launched in March 2015 by the City of Chicago, Metropolitan Planning Council and Friends of the Chicago River to reimagine Chicago's rivers and riverfronts. Our Leadership Commission represents the interests of millions of Chicagoans, and Bubbly Creek holds a special place in our shared vision for a cleaner and more accessible river. With the Stockyards long gone, the frequency of combined sewer flows significantly decreased, and a hunger for river access in neighborhoods throughout Chicago, now is the time to move Bubbly Creek's restoration forward, not backward.

There is great support for this project. The City of Chicago committed to be the local sponsor. Friends of the Chicago River and local stakeholders are in support, as is new 11th Ward Ald. Patrick Daley Thompson. We are poised to work with you, the Environmental Protection Agency, Integrys and other relevant parties to determine that path forward within USACE's expansive legal and regulatory authorities. We strongly encourage you to use those abilities to overcome Bubbly Creek's legacy and transform it into a recreational, natural and economic treasure.

140 S. Dearborn
Suite 1400
Chicago, Illinois 60603





Our region needs the USACE and our federal, state and local partners to make environmental restoration of the Chicago River a priority. We encourage you to work with us to find solutions to the current situations without delaying the goal of restoring Bubbly Creek.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Michael Borgstrom, Wendella Boats
Grant Crowley, Crowley's Yacht Yard Lakeside, LLC
Michael Faron, W. E. O'Neil Construction Company
David Farren, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Michael Forde, Illinois International Port District
Jeanne Gang, Studio Gang Architects
Michael Holzer, North Branch Works
Todd Hudson, Illinois River Carriers Association
Mike Kelly, Chicago Park District
Allen LaPointe, John G. Shedd Aquarium
Suzanne Malec-McKenna, Chicago Wilderness
Dorri McWhorter, YWCA
Commissioner Andy Mooney, City of Chicago Dept. of Planning & Development
Paul Ozinga, Ozinga RMC, Inc.
Howard Radzely, The Boeing Company
Arnold Randall, Forest Preserves of Cook County
Paul Roldan, Hispanic Housing Development Corporation
Carol Ross Barney, Ross Barney Architects, Inc.
Alpana Singh, Restaurant Proprietor and Master Sommelier
Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Darryl Tom, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
Kimberly Wasserman, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
David Wong, Certare Ventures

MarySue Barrett, President, Metropolitan Planning Council

Cc:
Director Lisa Bonnett, Ill. EPA
Col. Christopher T. Drew, Chicago District, USACE
U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin
Mayor Rahm Emanuel, City of Chicago
U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez
Susan Hedman, U.S. EPA Region 5
U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk
U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski
John McHugh, Secretary of the Army
President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County
Gov. Bruce Rauner, State of Illinois
Ald. Patrick Daley Thompson

140 S. Dearborn
Suite 1400
Chicago, Illinois 60603

