



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 6, 2011

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

(312) 744-3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Anne Rowan, 312-353-9391, [rowan.anne@epa.gov](mailto:rowan.anne@epa.gov)

Phillippa Cannon, 312-353-6218, [cannon.phillippa@epa.gov](mailto:cannon.phillippa@epa.gov)

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY APPROVES NEW WATER QUALITY STANDARDS  
FOR CHICAGO RIVER SYSTEM**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved the State of Illinois' new and revised water quality standards for five segments of the Chicago and Calumet Rivers.

"In May of this year, US EPA notified the State of Illinois that upgraded water quality standards were necessary to protect the health and safety of the increasing number of people who use these rivers for recreation," said EPA Regional Administrator Susan Hedman. "We are pleased that Illinois acted quickly to adopt new standards, which will help to further the transformation of the Chicago river system from sewage canal to valuable recreational and economic asset."

"Today's action by the EPA and the State of Illinois both reaffirm their commitment to the Chicago river system and supports the City's comprehensive plan for river development to ensure all Chicagoans have access to clean and green public spaces," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "While Lake Michigan is Chicago's front yard, the Chicago River is our backyard, a lifeline for commerce that will be an economic and recreational treasure, a destination for Chicagoans in any neighborhood."

"Chicago is a world-class city that deserves a world-class river," said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. "I am glad that the EPA's notification earlier this year was met with swift action by state and local officials. By raising water quality standards, we can improve the waterways in and around Chicago and make them more accessible for future generations."

"The city of Chicago should have a safe, clean river that can be enjoyed by residents and tourists alike," said U.S. Senator Mark Kirk. "These revised water quality standards are a step in the right



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

direction for making the Chicago River as healthy as any in America. I applaud our state and local officials who acted upon the EPA's May notification."

"Illinois' rivers and lakes are some of our most important natural resources, and families should be able to enjoy activities like boating, fishing and swimming," said Governor Pat Quinn. "I am pleased that portions of the Chicago and Calumet Rivers will now be more available to people for recreational use, and we are committed to continuing our work to make Illinois' waterways clean and safe for the public."

"The Chicago River has been polluted for far too long," said Attorney General Lisa Madigan. "These new standards will clean it so that it can be a vital natural resource enjoyed by people throughout the Chicago area."

The approved standards apply to the North and South Branches of the Chicago River, the North Shore Channel, the Cal-Sag Channel and the Little Calumet River. EPA continues to review the other new and revised water quality standards that the State of Illinois has proposed for the Chicago Area Waterway System and the Lower Des Plaines River.

Information about US EPA's action and a map showing the affected segments of the Chicago Area Waterway System are available at [www.epa.gov/region5/chicagoriver/](http://www.epa.gov/region5/chicagoriver/).

###