



McKinley Boat Owners Association (McBoat)

P.O Box 837

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www.mcboat.org

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January 9, 2019

File #171765: Communication from the Department of Public Works regarding bridge operations

To Whom it May Concern,

The McKinley Boat Owners Association (McBoat) is contacting you today to advise you of our opposition to the action taken on 12/5/18 to proceed with requesting permission from the United States Coast Guard (USCG) an expansion to the existing restrictions of the navigable waterways of the Milwaukee river system.

McBoat submits the following in basis of our opposition:

- **There is no record of a significant problem that needs to be addressed.** The City of Milwaukee cites "...considerable input..." from residents inferring that a large number of complaints have been received. When, per the City Engineer Craig Liberto, the actual number of complaints received have been 3 total complaints; 1 in 2016 (resolved), 1 in 2017 (resolved), and the current complaint awaiting resolution as the bridge in question was non-operation during the 2018 boating season. Summarily all of these complaints were about pedestrian and/or vehicular warning signals during opening procedures.
- **The Committee failed to follow established process by not inviting public comment after a proposal was made.** The City of Milwaukee references the April 25, 2018 Public Works Committee meeting and a Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) held on May 23, 2018 as having private and commercial boat owners in attendance. This was in no way due to the City reaching out for boater attendance as the boaters in attendance caused the Chair of the committee to cancel numerous planned items to hear unplanned public comments. And the DNA meeting was a panel discussion in which McBoat's President took part in. At neither of these meetings were any proposals ever presented, posted or discussed. In fact, Alderman Bauman is on record stating that no proposal was on the table after a lengthy description of the different types of files that the city maintains in similar matters.
- **Pleasure boaters are not the cause of the majority of bridge openings and commercial boats are exempt from these proposed restrictions.** At the December 5, 2018 Public Works Committee meeting the Engineer in Charge of Bridges Craig Liberto presents information which show an increase of 787 (4.03%) openings above the 2017 openings for the same time periods and bridges. Immediately after this data is presented Mr. Liberto explains that the increase in openings have come from commercial traffic much of which is exempt from these proposed rules but has voluntarily adjusted schedules to comply with 33 CFR 117.1093. this can only mean that the recreational boaters will bear the brunt of these legislative changes when they are not the cause of them in any fashion.



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- **Restricting river access will have a negative impact on Milwaukee businesses.** Milwaukee has learned to embrace its riverfront and business owners and residents have responded favorably. Huge investments have been made in the installation of dockage and amenities intended to attract visitors to the riverfront. Restricting river traffic in the evening hours will have a negative financial impact on those businesses. We should be working together to encourage growth and use of this city feature. The restrictions proposed are regressive and uninformed and show little care for business owners along the riverfront.

For the reasons noted above, the McKinley Boat Owners Association strongly opposes the proposed additional restrictions on bridge operations over the Milwaukee river system.

On behalf, request and in full support of the elected Board of Directors,

Brent Holmes, President
McKinley Boat Owners Association

Lynn Bauman, Secretary
McKinley Boat Owners Association

Cc: Ald. Bauman, Ald. Borkowski, Ald. Johnson, Ald. Kovac, Ald. Murphy, Common Council President Ald. Hamilton, Mayor Tom Barrett, United States Coast Guard, Commissioner of Public Works Jeffrey S. Polenske