



Department of Public Works

Jeffrey Polenske, P.E.
Commissioner of Public Works

January 3, 2019

S.M. Striffler
Chief, Bridge Branch
United States Coast Guard
1240 East 9th Street
Cleveland, OH 44199

Mr. Striffler,

The City of Milwaukee is requesting to make updates to Title 33, Section 117.1093 of the Code of Federal Regulations, regarding bridge operations on the three navigable waterways in the city of Milwaukee.

The City has had considerable input regarding a significant increase in bridge openings from residents from downtown Milwaukee, where the majority of the movable bridges are located. These complaints were brought to the downtown alderman, Robert Bauman, who is also the Chair of the Public Works Committee. Bridge operations were the subject of three Public Works Committee meetings, and a Downtown Neighborhood Association meeting. Commercial and private boat owners attended the Public Works Committee meeting on April 25, 2018, and the Downtown Neighborhood Association meeting on May 23, 2018 and provided their input. The main concerns that were expressed by constituents are as follows:

- Number of Bridge Openings. In 2014, there were 14,003 bridge openings and in 2017 the number increased to 23,244 due to a combination of elevated water levels and increased boat traffic. The increased openings impact the various modes of street traffic.
- Horns Sounding prior to the Bridge Opening. Milwaukee has experienced an increase in housing directly adjacent to a number of downtown bridges causing displeasure from residents on the horn noise.
- Extending Bridge Hours During the Evening Rush Hour. Boat traffic has increased resulting in more openings during peak rush hour times resulting in back-ups to street and pedestrian traffic.



The City of Milwaukee is attempting to facilitate a balance between marine traffic and various modes of street traffic, in addition to addressing the concerns of downtown residents. We also would like to make changes to the regulations to help facilitate our staffing and operations, based on the amount of river traffic. We would also like to incorporate an extended notice from openings during winter months. We are requesting to make the following changes to the Milwaukee subsection of the regulations:

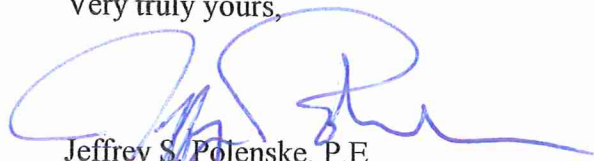
- Extend the afternoon bridge hours from 4:30 through 5:30 pm, to 4:00 through 5:30 pm Monday through Friday.
- Adopt a two-hour notice for bridge openings between the hours of 11:00 pm and 7:00 am. This will allow the City to not require as much staffing during third shift when there are few requests for openings.
- Include an extended notice for bridge openings in the winter months, which the City typically provides to the Coast Guard via request letter each fall. The language would be similar to subsections for other Wisconsin rivers (e.g.: §117.1087 Fox River, §117.1089 Manitowoc River, §117.1091 Menomonee River).

Attached herewith to substantiate our request are the following documents:

- Our proposed changes to the language of §117.1093 of CFR Title 33, Chapter I, subchapter J, regarding bridge operations in the city of Milwaukee.
- A summary of average daily traffic for City of Milwaukee movable bridges.
- Traffic count on bridges that are the main arterials for exiting downtown during rush hour.
- Three years of bridge opening logs (2016 to 2018).
- Openings from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. from 2016-2018.
- List of speakers and boat owners who attended the Public Works Committee on April 26, 2018.

Our proposed updates to the regulations were presented on December 5, 2018 before the Public Works Committee. The committee was in agreement with our proposed changes.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey S. Polenske, P.E.
Commissioner of Public Works

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Attachment