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USCG-2006-25767-416

ILLINOIS STATE SENATE

©CAPITOL OFFICE:
122 STATE CAPITOL BUILDING
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706
PHONE: 217/782-8181
FAX: 217/558-6006

©DISTRICT OFFICE:
906 MUIR AVENUE
LAKE BLUFF, ILLINOIS 60044
PHONE: 847/735-8181
FAX: 847/735 8184



©COMMITTEES:
REVENUE, VICE CHAIRMAN
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
APPROPRIATIONS II

©E-MAIL:
senator@link30.org

TERRY LINK
MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIRMAN
STATE SENATOR - 30th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

November 1, 2006

Docket Management Facility (USCG-2006-2567)
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room PL-401
400 Seventh St. SW
Washington D.C. 20590-0001

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to provide input regarding the proposed Coast Guard Live Fire Zones in Lake Michigan.

Affected citizens in the area between Wilmette and Waukegan in Illinois have met to gather information specific to the safety and impact of live machine gun fire near our shoreline. This testimony represents input from park districts, boating clubs, swimmers, municipalities and elected officials. We have put together a list of several modifications to your proposal to make the live fire zones safer and more realistic for conditions in this portion of Lake Michigan.

We appreciate your recognition of the significance of the concerns of the citizens of Illinois by adding this additional hearing here in Gurnee. While not everyone is able to attend this evening, I want you to know that I present this testimony on behalf of many municipalities, park districts, yacht clubs and my co-legislators as witnessed by their signatures to this written document. *Specific modification requests are as follows:*

1. Integrate Live Fire Zone Alerts with the NOAA station. It was felt that everyone listens to the marine weatherband, while Coast Guard Channel 16, suggested by the Coast Guard, was not monitored the same way.
2. Ban Live Fire practice between April 1 and November 15 each year. The season for boating in this portion of the lake runs from April 1 thru November 15, with many of the boats returning Waukegan Harbor from Chicago for winter storage at that time. Although activity might decrease some after Labor Day, it in no way

- diminishes to the extent you may have thought. One of the larger sailing clubs hosts a Halloween Regatta with over 100 participants in Lake Forest.
3. One safety ship to monitor the perimeter of the safety zone is insufficient. A second boat should be provided for added safety.
 4. Because the larger boats docked in this area go out further than six miles, we request a 15 mile minimum distance from shore. We were told the machine gun fire has a range of two miles, so the additional distance from shore would keep it out of the popular Waukegan to Chicago corridor. While many small craft travel within a few miles of the shore, larger pleasure boats which can cross Lake Michigan as well as the charter fishing boats and the commercial fishermen go much further from the shore.
 5. There should be positive notification to local municipalities, park districts, yacht clubs and public safety. After notification of test dates, positive response of receipt of notification must be received by the Coast Guard to ensure that all communities will have the best opportunities to post advisories.
 6. Further environmental impact studies need be conducted, specific to the Great Lakes area and not salt water bodies. Of major concern is the impact of lead in Lake Michigan. We urge you to make public your plans for long term monitoring of all contaminants so we can be assured of the safety of our drinking water supply and the food chain of fresh water fish.

We are not necessarily opposed to the use of live machine gun fire by the Coast Guard for the enhanced national and local security these exercises will provide. We do want to work with you to ensure optimum communication with our citizens who use Lake Michigan, whether commercial fisherman or pleasure boaters, and local officials who are responsible for the safety of their residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to you in person on behalf of myself and the following co-signers of this document.

Sincerely,



Terry Link
State Senator 30th District