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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

November 13, 2006

USCG-2006-25767-757

Rear Admiral John E. Crowley, Jr.
District Commander
Ninth Coast Guard District
United States Coast Guard
A.J. Celebrezze Federal Building
1240 East Ninth Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44199-2060

Dear Admiral Crowley:

As Mayor, and on behalf of the residents of Chicago, I am writing to express my serious concerns with the Coast Guard's proposal to conduct live fire training exercises on the Great Lakes. As you know, the Great Lakes are a source of clean fresh water for millions of people in the region. In addition, the Lakes support countless recreational, commercial, tourism, and cultural activities. For all of these reasons, the City of Chicago has been active in efforts to protect the health of the Great Lakes, as well as the health and safety of the millions of people who enjoy them each year. My concern is that this plan, as proposed, would be a step in the wrong direction.

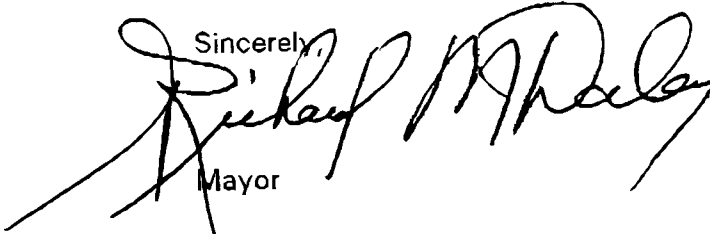
The Coast Guard has a long history of providing a great public service to the boating public. I am concerned that, in the name of security, the Coast Guard could unintentionally put at risk the very boaters that you are charged with protecting. It is unclear at this point whether or not it is possible to locate a zone for "live-fire" exercises that is adequately removed from recreational and commercial boat traffic. It is also unclear if existing methods of notifying boaters would be sufficient to prevent a terrible accident.

In the last 30 years, much work has been done to improve the quality of the water in the Great Lakes. We have gone to great lengths to eliminate a variety of sources of pollution to these waters. In this context, it seems curious that the Coast Guard would propose exercises that would deposit into the Great Lakes several thousand pounds of lead and other metals every year. I am particularly troubled by the fact that the assessment only looked at impacts for the next five years and did not include the potential risk to drinking water quality.

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As Mayor of the largest city on the Great Lakes, I fully understand the need to be mindful of security issues. However, I urge the Coast Guard to explore alternative training locations, methods, and materials, including simulators and munitions that would not add pollution to the Lakes. Further, I urge the Coast Guard to work with local governments to adopt security strategies that fit each community rather than institute measures that may, in the end, do more harm than good.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your efforts to work with mayors around the Great Lakes as well as your genuine desire to consider the perspective of municipal leaders on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mayor