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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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WAUKEGAN REJECTS HARBOR CLEANUP AGREEMENT WITH EPA

CHICAGO (Aug. 23, 2007) – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 has informed the City of Waukegan that a proposed agreement to dredge Waukegan Harbor using Great Lakes Legacy Act funds cannot proceed due to contingencies added by the city.

“EPA is extremely disappointed that Waukegan has rejected an agreement that other cities around the Great Lakes have signed and that would have benefited Lake Michigan,” said Gary Gulezian, EPA Great Lakes National Program Office Director. “Unfortunately, Waukegan has opted not to proceed with the cleanup.”

On July 27, EPA received a version of the project agreement from the city containing a number of added contingencies unrelated to the environmental cleanup of the harbor.

In an August 21 letter to Waukegan Mayor Richard C. Hyde, EPA stated:

“The contingencies added by Waukegan are not only unnecessary, but they have nothing to do with restoration.... As we have made clear, U.S. EPA will not sign a project agreement that contains contingencies other than those that are included in our standard project agreements.”

Waukegan presented its original proposal to an EPA review panel in February 27, 2007. The cleanup would have resulted in 250,000 cubic yards of PCB-contaminated sediment being removed from Waukegan Harbor. The estimated total cost of the project was \$36 million – \$23.4 million from the Great Lakes Legacy Act and the balance from local sources.

Congress passed and the president signed the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 to address the problem of contaminated sediment in American areas of concern on the Great Lakes such as Waukegan Harbor. Areas of concern are severely degraded sites within the lakes where there is significant pollution. Polluted sediment is a reason many Great Lakes fish are not safe to eat in unlimited quantities. It also harms aquatic life and habitat and pollutes sources of drinking water.

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