

IEPA Log No.: **C-0066-19**  
CoE appl. #: **LRC-2019-132**

Public Notice Beginning Date: **December 23, 2019**  
Public Notice Ending Date: **January 13, 2020**

Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act  
Amendments of 1972

**Section 401 Water Quality Certification for Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material**

**Public Notice/Fact Sheet Issued By:**

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency  
Bureau of Water  
Permit Section  
1021 North Grand Avenue East  
Post Office Box 19276  
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276  
217/782-3362

**Name and Address of Discharger:** Nancy Tani – 2729 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201

**Discharge Location:** Near Evanston in SE 1/4 of Section 35 of Township 42-North, Range 13-East of the East 3rd P.M. in Cook County.

**Name of Receiving Water:** Lake Michigan

**Project Description:** Proposed quarystone breakwater groin and revetment with sandfill shoreline protection project.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has received an application for a Section 401 water quality certification to discharge dredged or fill material into the waters of the State associated with a Section 404 permit application received by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. The last day comments will be received will be on the Public Notice period ending date unless a commenter demonstrating the need for additional time requests an extension to this comment period and the request is granted by the IEPA. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters shall provide their names and addresses along with comments on the certification application. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. The certification and notice number(s) must appear on each comment page.

The attached Fact Sheet provides a description of the project and the antidegradation assessment.

The application, Public Notice/Fact Sheet, comments received, and other documents are available for inspection and may be copied at the IEPA at the address shown above between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when scheduled by the interested person.

If written comments or requests indicate a significant degree of public interest in the certification application, the IEPA may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing. If a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, response to relevant comments will be provided at the time of the certification. For further information, please contact Darren Gove at email [darren.gove@illinois.gov](mailto:darren.gove@illinois.gov) or phone no. 217/782-3362.

DRG:C-0066-19\_401 PN and FS\_12Apr19.docx

Nancy Tani (“Applicant”) has requested a Section 401 water quality certification for impacts to Lake Michigan associated with proposed construction of a new shore-connected quarry-stone breakwater (“activity”) at 2729 Sheridan Road in Evanston, Cook County, Illinois.

The proposed activity would be constructed to reduce erosion of existing beach sand and lakebed clay by incident wave energy. The project would involve two quarry stone breakwater groins and supplemental quarrystone on exiting shoreline revetment and quarry sand nourishment. The two breakwater groins would form a small embayment beach with the southern groin extending northward from an existing quarrystone groin at the adjacent property and the northern groin extending lakeward from the shoreline and existing steel sheet pile wall approximately 35 feet and curving slightly to the south at the lakeward end. Where exposed after stone placement, the existing steel wall would be cut and removed to not be visible. Together the two breakwaters would form an approximate 30-foot gap opening to the shoreline at this property. The breakwater’s cross-sectional profile includes approximately 1V:1.5H side slopes with a 10-foot-wide crest at 583 ft. elevation (LGLD 1985). Existing shoreline revetment to the north (on adjacent property) would be restored with adjusted and new armorstone. All fill material would be obtained from quarries and would thereby be considered clean fill. Placement of stone and sand and work would be accomplished from the shoreline, accessed via the subject properties. The total quantities of fill include 100 cubic yards of sand and 190 cubic yards of stone that would be placed over approximately 0.07 acres that are below Lake Michigan Ordinary High Water Mark (581.5 feet, LGLD 1985).

Information used in this review was obtained from the Joint Application Form received on April 12, 2019 and updated permit application documents and for AECOM Project No. 60561121, received by the Agency on December 6, 2019.

### **Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.**

Illinois has jurisdiction over 1,526 square miles of Lake Michigan open water, 3.88 square miles of Lake Michigan harbors and 64 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, which are covered under the Lake Michigan Basin Water Quality Standards. Lake Michigan shoreline protection enhancement projects take place within two Lake Michigan Water types: Lake Michigan Open Waters and Lake Michigan Shoreline.

Lake Michigan Open Waters, Waterbody Segment, QLM-01, is listed on the draft 2018 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls. Aquatic life, public and food processing water supply, primary recreational contact, secondary contact and aesthetic quality uses are fully supported.

Lake Michigan Shoreline Waters comprise 51 waterbody segments that span the entire 64 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline (excluding harbors and harbor entrances) within Illinois. Each of these segments are listed on the draft 2018 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls and primary contact with a potential cause of Escherichia coli.

The Illinois EPA has completed 51 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reports to address primary recreational use impairments by bacteria at beaches along Lake Michigan's Shoreline in Illinois. These TMDL reports are presented in 3 separate documents for the following areas: Lake County (9 beaches), Suburban Cook County (13 beaches), and the City of Chicago (29 beaches). These documents are available at <https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/water-quality/watershed-management/tmdls/Pages/reports.aspx>

### **Identification of Proposed Pollutant Load Increases or Potential Impacts on Uses.**

The pollutant load increases that would occur from the proposed activity include some possible increases in total suspended solids. These increases, a normal and unavoidable result of the construction of shoreline erosion protection structures, may occur in the lake at the point of construction activity.

Material used in the construction of this project includes or may include nonerodable quarry stone of varying sizes, sand obtained from construction sand quarries and steel sheet-pile.

Benthic habitat will also be disturbed in the vicinity of the construction area as open lakebed area would be converted to shoreline protection structures or overlain by additional sand.

TMDL reports have been prepared by the Agency and approved by the USEPA for 51 beaches along Illinois' Lake Michigan shoreline to address Primary Contact Use Recreation impairments due to excess bacteria. The proposed activity may occur within an area identified by the report "Shoreline Segments in Suburban Cook County, Illinois", May 15, 2013, as a Beach Protection Area subject to that TMDL. The proposed activity would alter the shape of the shoreline in the vicinity of the project but is not expected to cause the effects associated with embayments in the nearshore waters and therefore is not considered a potential source of pathogenic bacterial loading of nearby public beaches.

### **Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.**

The increase in suspended solids, from the construction of the quarry stone breakwater, will be local and temporary.

Although the benthic habitat will be disturbed by the construction activities, it is anticipated to recover and improve over time due to the placement of sand over exposed clay lakebed substrates. Additionally, the voids within the proposed quarry-stone breakwater structures are expected to provide a stable and diverse habitat opportunity for fish and other aquatic species.

No mitigation is proposed for this project because the total area of waters of the U.S. impacted by this project is less than the 0.1 acres deemed by the Corps of Engineers to be the threshold of minimal adverse environmental impact.

Supplemental information provided by the applicant regarding strategies to reduce *E. coli* loading as a result of beach modification indicate that the project would comply with the TMDL's water quality concentration limit load allocation of 126 cfu/100ml. The proposed embayment of the shoreline would be created with clean fill materials and would feature greater slope and a smaller swash zone. These and additional proposed improvements are expected to contribute to an overall reduction of *E. coli* loading to the segment of Lake Michigan shoreline impacted by this project and meet the TMDL's goals.

### **Purpose and Anticipated Benefits of the Proposed Activity.**

The purpose of Lake Michigan shoreline protection enhancement projects are to establish a more stable layer of sand that serves to reduce downcutting of the clay lakebed and prevents erosion along the project-affected length of the shoreline as well as to provide a higher level of shoreline protection during higher lake levels and larger storm waves. The purpose of the proposed sand nourishment is to offset any littoral sands whose drift would be restricted by the proposed shoreline protection structures and to maintain sand lost during storm events. Erosion of the lakebed and bluff, if not prevented, would undermine existing shoreline structures or the bluff and result in additional beach erosion and resuspension of clays found in the substrate material.

### **Assessments of Alternatives for Less Increase in Loading or Minimal Environmental Degradation.**

Given that suspended solids are the pollutants primarily associated with the Lake Michigan shoreline protection enhancement projects, the incorporation of best management practices are the most practical means of pollution prevention. Such practices include performing work with heavy machinery from outside of the water as on a barge or from the shoreline and careful placement techniques when constructing offshore breakwater structures. Practical alternatives to structural shoreline protection such as dune plantings and living shorelines generally are not recommended for coastal zones with high levels of wave action. Shoreline structures placed upland of the ordinary high-water mark such as shore parallel stone revetment may not be suitable for all stretches of shoreline. The variability of Lake Michigan's shoreline including but not limited to orientation relative to wave attack, nearby existing structures, lakeward and landward shoreline profiles, existing depths of beach sand, and proximity of residential/commercial structures all factor into the applicant's determination of shoreline protection needs. Costs of shoreline stabilization work is significant and under-engineered structures that end up failing may result in additional repair work, erosion of tableland or loss of property. The do nothing alternative would leave the eroding shoreline in its existing state, which would lead to lakebed downcutting and additional shoreline erosion. Higher lake levels and larger storm waves would cause increased vulnerability of the tableland or bluff and therefore greater risk of property loss. The construction of the proposed project would follow conditions set forth by the Agency, Illinois DNR and USACE. The least intrusive alternative would be to

not complete the project. This is not an acceptable alternative given the need to protect the shoreline from additional erosion during storm surges. Completion of the proposed project would allow for protection of Lake Michigan shoreline and nearby structures.

### **Summary Comments of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Regional Planning Commissions, Zoning Boards or Other Entities**

On July 1, 2019 IDNR's Chicago Regulatory office indicated it was anticipating information regarding co-applicants because of work proposed on adjacent properties, therefore authorization pursuant to Rivers, Lakes and Streams Act, "615 ILCS 5" was pending. On July 1, 2019, IDNR's Division of Ecosystems and Environment determined that the Banded Killifish (*Fundulus diaphanous*) may be in vicinity of the project location and therefore required additional time to review the project prior to finalizing consultation pursuant to IDNR's Ecological Compliance Assessment Tool (EcoCAT).

### **Agency Conclusion**

This preliminary assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 (antidegradation standard) and was based on the information available to the Agency at the time this assessment was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity will result in the attainment of water quality standards; that all technically and economically reasonable measures to avoid or minimize the extent of the proposed increase in pollutant loading have been incorporated into the proposed activity; and that this activity will provide a stable shoreline system that reduces the impacts of wave energy, protects benthic habitats, prevents the further bluff destabilization, retains a sandy beach area, and provides access for landowners to the lake. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.