

July 15, 2013

Lieutenant Colonel James DeLapp
United State Army Corps of Engineers, Nashville District
110 9th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37203-3863

Ms. Tammy R. Turley
Chief of Regulatory Branch
United States Army Corps of Engineers, Nashville District
3701 Bell Road
Nashville, TN 37214

Dear Lieutenant Colonel DeLapp and Chief Turley:

Thank you for the work the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does managing the Tennessee River as it flows through Chattanooga. The river is the reason Chattanooga exists and the commercial value of the waterway cannot be underestimated.

About thirty years ago, the residents of Chattanooga began a long process of cleaning up and transforming the riverfront from a neglected blight to a beautiful place that is now known around the world. Twenty years ago we opened one of the finest Aquariums in the country. Ten years ago the community invested \$120 million dollars in our "front yard" for the enjoyment of every citizen and visitor. In large part this transformation was the catalyst for new jobs, spurred new tourism and revived downtown living.

We need your help in dealing with one of the last eyesores on our waterfront. Ironically, it is not a historical vestige, but a vessel that was towed to Chattanooga over four years ago from Pennsylvania to be rebuilt into a floating restaurant. When it first arrived, the community was excited about the possibility of a new, waterfront eatery. But that excitement has turned to disgust as we have watched the vessel sink and deteriorate, and our false hopes have evaporated.

We have learned from media reports that the Section 10 permit for the barge was suspended effective May 15 because the barge is much larger than its permit allows. Since the barge has been in violation of its permit for many years, we urge your immediate and rapid enforcement of the regulations that keep America's waterways safe and commercially viable.

Recently, torrential rains and near flooding conditions have caused much faster than normal river flow. The one remaining piling that moors the barge is tilted at a dangerous angle. The poor condition of the barge and its moorings appear to create a hazardous condition for vital commerce on the river and possibly for the Olgiate Bridge which carries thousands of trucks and cars in and out of the city every day.

We understand that processing the violation may take time, but we encourage you to expedite the work and to consider moving the barge to some less conspicuous and less dangerous location immediately.

We appreciate your work and look forward to a rapid and effective resolution to this problem, which will help Chattanooga to extend its reputation as the greatest mid-sized city in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ron Harr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" being more prominent than the last name "Harr".

Ron Harr
President & CEO
Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce