



Bartman's Garden Community Boathouse  
5400 Lindbergh Blvd  
Philadelphia, PA 19142

February 12, 2020

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Clean Water  
Water Quality Division  
Attn: Heidi Eggen  
P.O. Box 8774  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8774

Delaware River Basin Commission  
25 Corey Road  
P.O. Box 7392  
West Trenton, NJ 08628-0392

To Whom It May Concern:

We are a group of volunteers, high school interns, and staff who support public boating and fishing programs at Bartman's Garden Community Boathouse. We have been collecting water quality data over the past few years, and we write to you to provide our data for consideration in the assessment of Pennsylvania's water quality.

Bartman's Garden Community Boathouse has offered free and low-cost public boating and fishing programs on the Mid Schuylkill River since 2015. These programs are supported by a crew of over 100 dedicated volunteers and a youth crew of high school interns who facilitate a safe boating experience for all guests. On Saturdays between late April and late October,<sup>1</sup> our free kayaking and rowing program typically attracts between 100-300 participants, many of whom are first time boaters. In 2019, over 1,600 people participated in our boating and fishing programs.

As a result of controls on many industrial point sources of pollution along the Schuylkill River, the vast improvement in water quality over the last few decades has made it feasible for people to safely access and enjoy this public waterway. However, the tidal portion of the Schuylkill is still subjected to frequent and persistent inputs of pollution, with direct impact on our program safety from the approximately 40 combined sewer overflow discharge points that empty raw sewage into the river during many rain events. Our policy is to cancel public boating within 24 hours of receipt of a quarter-inch or more, though we have sometimes been more conservative because the Philadelphia Water Department's CSO/Cast web site has indicated in the past that overflows can be triggered by as little as a tenth of an inch of rain. This cancellation policy is determined to be protective of our guests based on our understanding of the interactions of

<sup>1</sup>Note that our program season begins earlier and ends later than the Water Contact season defined by DEP as May-September.