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June 30, 2016

Mr. William Zawiski
Environmental Supervisor
Division of Surface Water
Ohio EPA
2110 East Aurora Rd.
Twinsburg, OH 44087

Dear Mr. Zawiski,

This letter serves as Friends of the Crooked River support for removal of the Gorge Dam.

FOCR, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, is dedicated to preserving and restoring the benefits of the Cuyahoga River. FOCR's mission is to increase public awareness of the vast recreational, cultural, historic, and environmental resources of the Cuyahoga River; to expand general understanding of the policies and practices which degrade water quality and wildlife habitat in the watershed; and to promote responsible use of the river's resources.

Since 1996, FOCR has worked with Ohio EPA and other river partners to remove obsolete dams on the Cuyahoga River. We served on the Middle Cuyahoga TMDL Committee, the Kent Dam Advisory Committee, and the Section 106 Review Committee. We organized public participation for the Munroe Falls dam removal. We worked closely with the City of Cuyahoga Falls to remove two dams there. Each of these projects has resulted in many benefits to the river, water quality, regional recreation, and local economic development. Perhaps most importantly, these projects have increased public recognition of the value of clean water and of a free-flowing Cuyahoga River.

The dominos are falling downstream. We have arrived at the big dam, the Gorge Dam.

The Gorge Dam is one of the single greatest unresolved water quality problems on the Cuyahoga River. It creates a 1.5-mile pool with significant chemical water quality and biological community impacts. The 832,000 cubic yards of sediment at the base of the pool are a threat to the human and aquatic life health. Until the sediment is removed and the dam deconstructed, the restoration of the Cuyahoga River—a symbol of the effectiveness of the Clean Water Act and Great Lakes Restoration—cannot be achieved.

The dam was built in 1914 to produce hydroelectric power and to provide cooling water for a coal-fired power plant. Hydro operations ceased in 1958. The coal plant was closed in 1991, and the last of the power plant dismantled in 2009.

Now, only the dam, a 400-foot-wide, 60-foot-tall obsolete hunk of concrete, remains. It stands like a sentinel of the past, obscuring the Cuyahoga's promise and obstructing the economic destiny of the River's Gorge area in the City of Cuyahoga Falls.

Here, a little over halfway along its crooked course to Lake Erie, the river falls over 200 feet in less than two miles. Prior to the industrialization of the gorge and the spoiling of water quality, High Bridge Glens Park took advantage of this astonishing topography. The park drew visitors from across the country and was the single largest tourist attraction in Northeast Ohio. We can recapture that status. We need only to remove the dam and restore the breathtaking natural landscape of the River's falls and gorges.

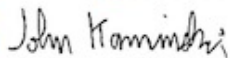
A restored Cuyahoga River Gorge will be an economic generator for all of Northeast Ohio for generations to come. It will be a central hub of water and land-based recreation for the region. It will proudly stand as a testament to the foresight and determination of the people of the watershed. It will be a great victory for the Cuyahoga River and its water quality.

We have seen a hint of the promise of a restored Cuyahoga Falls Gorge. On April 23, 2016, a group of kayaking interests sponsored a race in the upper gorge, upstream of the dam. With little notice, over 450 spectators showed up to watch the 25 expert participants negotiate the rapids and waterfalls. Removing the dam will add 1.5 miles of whitewater to the current .5 mile course. That restored whitewater course will become a spectacular attraction for paddlers, tourists, and spectators.

The potential value of removing the dam far exceeds the significant cost of removal. With a price tag of about \$70 million for removal of contaminated sediment and deconstruction of the dam, the project is an important, cost-effective investment. The costs of infrastructure projects, especially bridges, are often in this range. Removal of the Gorge Dam is the region's bridge to the future of the Cuyahoga River, a future that will feature clean water and its scenic, economic, and recreational values.

Friends of the Crooked River fully support the Gorge Dam removal and look forward to the day when the glory of the Gorge is fully restored to its breathtaking origins.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Kaminski".

John Kaminski,
President