The Honorable Quentin M. Hart  
Mayor of the City of Waterloo  
715 Mulberry St.  
Waterloo, Iowa 50703

Dear Mayor Hart:

April 19, 2016

Since our founding in 1880, the American Canoe Association (ACA) has grown into the nation’s largest and most active nonprofit paddlesports organization with 30,000 members and over 300 Clubs and Affiliates across the United States and abroad. We serve the canoe, kayak, raft and paddleboard communities by providing education related to all aspects of paddling, stewardship of paddling environments, sanctioning of programs and events and by promoting on-water safety.

We are writing to urge that you press forward with construction of the proposed downtown Waterloo whitewater park. The advantages of creating this park at the Park Ave. dam and adjacent area include safety of your citizens, increased vitality to your city and economic benefits to your businesses.

Safety is one reason to create the whitewater park. The backflow of water at the base of a low-head dam is a drowning hazard to inexperienced, casual users. This is one of the primary reasons that the Iowa DNR is undertaking a multi-year project to eliminate such dams. The eighty-foot section of the Park Ave. dam, the section that would be modified for the whitewater park, exhibits the greatest water flow and represents the greatest hazard. The whitewater modifications would greatly lessen this hazard.

The vitality of Waterloo will be enhanced by the whitewater park. The experience of other river towns in Iowa, such as Manchester, Charles City and Elkader, has been an increase of public activity along the river. Anglers, paddlers, tubers, waders and strollers are drawn to the sights and sounds of the cascading water and the surrounding park area that can be created from modifying the flow of water. This is a boon to the livelihood and morale of a city.

Economic benefits will also be gained for Waterloo as they have in other areas. Paddlers and anglers have an economic impact on the city. They purchase and rent fishing and boating equipment for their activities. Once off the river, they often head for the local restaurants and pubs to eat and enjoy conversation with their fellow enthusiasts.

In summary, we hope that you agree that the Waterloo Whitewater Park project has many benefits for Waterloo and the surrounding area. We urge you to press forward with this project.

Sincerely,

Louis F. Metzger  
Public Policy Chief  
c. Members of City Council