

The Marine Council

guardian of the marine community



November 23, 2011

Mr. Barry Dragon
United States Coast Guard Seventh District
Chief, Bridge Branch
Brickell Plaza Federal Building
909 SE 1st Avenue
Miami, Florida 33131-3050

RE: Proposed NW 12th Avenue Bridge Closure

Dear Mr. Dragon:

The Marine Council of Greater Miami (Marine Council) has reviewed the attached Miami Marlins proposal to close the NW 12th Avenue Bridge for 44 minutes during the pre-game arrival timeframe for weekday evening games and are supportive of the request. The proposal would NOT affect the transit of vessels under tow either exiting or entering the Miami River. The analysis of historic bridge openings during the proposed time period indicates that only a very small number of vessels would potentially be impacted by the closure.

Thank you for allowing us to comment on this request and if you have any questions please contact us.

The Marine Council of Greater Miami

By: Edward Swakon, President
Marine Council of Greater Miami

November 23, 2011

Date

Approved by its Board on November 23, 2011

Attachment: Marlins November 21, 2011 letter to CG



MIAMI MARLINS
WORLD CHAMPIONS
1997, 2003

November 22, 2011

Mr. Michael Lieberum
United States Coast Guard Seventh District
Bridge Branch - Chief of Operations Section
Brickell Plaza Federal Building
909 Southeast 1st Avenue
Miami, Florida 33131-3050

RE: Proposed NW 12th Avenue Bridge Opening Limitations during Pre-Game Baseball Weeknights

Dear Mr. Lieberum:

The owners and operators of the new Miami Marlins Ballpark are committed to offering a safe, comfortable and organized experience to baseball fans during their regular travel to and from the new facility. To this end we have analyzed the traffic flow around the ballpark and have worked closely with Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami to recommend strategies that will enhance mobility before and after baseball games.

In October of 2010, the Miami Marlins submitted a draft regulation to your office requesting that bridge openings be restricted during baseball pre-game and post-game timeframes – Monday through Sunday for a combined total of 165 minutes for each baseball game. After reviewing extensive bridge log data for the pre-game and post-game timeframes for both weekdays and weekends, and after gaining a better understanding of the Miami River stakeholders, the Marine Community and the function of the Miami River, the Miami Marlins have scaled back this request for a proposed bridge regulation as outlined below. The Miami Marlins have modified the proposal to restrict the openings of the NW 12th Avenue Bridge by requesting that the regulation apply only to a 44 minute window during the latter part of the pre-game arrival timeframe for weekday evening baseball games – Monday through Friday. This modified proposal will NOT affect the transit of vessels under tow either exiting or entering the Miami River. The analysis of historic bridge openings during the proposed time period indicates that only a very small number of vessels would potentially be impacted by the closure.

The Miami Marlins have presented these recommendations to many groups among the Greater Miami Community including local governmental agencies, businesses and civic groups. As part of that process, several recommendations have been made and the input provided has enabled our organization to refine the requested regulation. We respect the function and utility of the Miami River

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United States Coast Guard Seventh District
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operations, and are seeking to make one minor alteration to existing traffic patterns which impacts the river, but provides great enhancement in facilitating access to the new Ballpark.

As part of our due diligence in understanding the function and operations of the Miami River, the Miami Marlins have reached out to the Miami River Marine Group, the Miami Marine Counsel and the Miami River Commission. The Miami River Marine Group has given its verbal support for this proposed change. The Miami Marlins will formally ask each of these three organizations to support this modified proposal to request a change in the drawbridge regulations regarding the opening and closing of the NW 12th Avenue Bridge. As soon as letters are available from each of those groups, we will forward them to you. This proposed change does not impact the commercial traffic on the river consisting of vessels under tow or returning tugs. The Miami Marlins have studied the NW 12th Avenue bridge openings for the Year 2010 and have concluded that the proposed change will only impact a few vessels each month during the baseball season, and then only for a maximum of 44 minutes during the latter part of the pre-game arrival timeframe for weekday evening games.

The proposed regulation would only apply to baseball games played during the weekdays where the NW 12th Avenue Bridge would open on demand during its usual hours except between the hours of **6:46 pm and 7:30 pm**. The bridge will continue to open on demand for commercial vessels under tow and returning tugs. The proposed regulation would be inserted as New Paragraph (e) to **§ 117.305 for the Miami River**, and would state the following:

(e) On days when the Ballpark has scheduled weekday evening games, the draws of the N.W. 12th Avenue Bridge, mile 2.0 at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 6:46 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the draws need not open for the passage of vessels.

Once again – please note that the addition of New Paragraph (e) does not in any way impact the current bridge opening procedures outlined in Paragraph (a) of **§ 117.305 for the Miami River** which states that:

(a) General. Public vessels of the United States, tugs, tugs with tows, and vessels in a situation where a delay would endanger life or property shall, upon proper signal, be passed through the draw of each bridge listed in this section at any time.

The Miami Marlins have recognized that existing regulations are in place pursuant to **§ 117.305 for the Miami River**, and thus the following schedule would only exist for baseball games played on weekdays with respect to the existing and proposed bridge openings as outlined in existing Paragraph (b) and proposed Paragraph (e):

- 4:45 p.m. to 5:59 p.m. – existing Miami River regulation for the PM peak Hour – 74 minutes
- 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – no regulation – 45 minutes
- 6:46 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. – proposed regulation for the pre-game timeframe– 44 minutes



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The proposed regulation is intended to facilitate access to the Ballpark during the timeframe when the Miami Marlins anticipate the arrival of approximately 60% of the fan base prior to the first pitch. The regulation will assist in maintaining the steady progression of traffic from the east (from I-95 and SR 836), thus reducing the potential dangers of a backup onto the NW 12 Avenue exit ramp and spill back onto SR 836.

The regulation will assist in moving the inbound pre-game patrons over the river and into the on-site and off-site parking areas and will facilitate transit access from the Culmer Metrorail Station via the Ballpark-Metrorail Shuttle and transit access from the Civic Center via the City of Miami Health District – Ballpark Trolley.

To further support the proposed regulation, the Miami Marlins have prepared the attached **Outreach and Operational Plan** to address communication with River Stakeholders and traffic and pedestrian management during pre-game and post-game timeframes to minimize impacts to the Miami River marine operations.

As new neighbors to the Miami River corridor, we have reached out to the three major river organizations to gain their understanding, assistance and support. We have developed an Outreach and Operational Plan that will further mitigate any impacts that the proposed regulation might have on the river businesses. We believe that the proposed regulation and the Outreach and Operational Plan will benefit traffic operations for the vehicles operating in and around the area of the Miami River before, during and after baseball games. We recognize that these proposed plans will be subject to constant review and modification after the Ballpark opens to address refinements and improvements to the Operational Plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposed modification to the bridge opening schedule for the NW 12th Avenue Bridge. We look forward to your review and would request that we meet at your earliest convenience to review the language proposed and the next steps in the process to implement these bridge opening limitations for April of 2012.

Sincerely,



Claude Delorme
Exec VP Ballpark Development
Miami Marlins L.P.

Outreach and Operational Plan

Introduction

The Miami Marlins have prepared this **Outreach and Operational Plan** to address communication with River Stakeholders and traffic and pedestrian management during pre-game and post-game timeframes to minimize impacts to the Miami River marine operations. This proposed **Outreach and Operational Plan** has been prepared to support the request by the Miami Marlins to modify the bridge opening schedule for the NW 12th Avenue Bridge over the Miami River for a 44 minute window during the latter part of the pre-game arrival timeframe for weekday evening baseball games – Monday through Friday. This modified proposal will NOT affect the transit of vessels under tow either exiting or entering the Miami River. The analysis of historic bridge openings during this proposed time period indicates that only a very small number of vessels would potentially be impacted by this proposed bridge opening schedule.

Proposed Regulation - Addition of Paragraph (e) to § 117.305 Miami River

(e) On days when the Ballpark has scheduled weekday evening games, the draws of the N.W. 12th Avenue Bridge, mile 2.0 at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 6:46 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the draws need not open for the passage of vessels.

Current and Proposed Bridge Opening Schedule

The Miami Marlins have recognized that existing drawbridge regulations are in place Monday through Friday pursuant to **§ 117.305 for the Miami River**, and thus the following schedule would exist on baseball game weekdays with respect to the existing and proposed bridge openings as outlined in existing Paragraph (b) and proposed Paragraph (e):

- 4:45 p.m. to 5:59 p.m. – existing regulation – 74 minutes
- 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – no regulation – 45 minutes
- 6:46 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. – proposed regulation – 44 minutes

Outreach with Miami River Stakeholders

The following outreach elements will be implemented as part of the requested modification to the bridge opening schedule for weekday evening baseball games:

- Obtain the electronic listing of River Stakeholders from the Miami River Marine Group, the Miami Marine Counsel and the Miami River Commission.
- Provide electronic notice and communication with River Stakeholders at least twice per month during Baseball Season to provide the current baseball game schedule inclusive of days of the week, game start times and anticipated game end times.
- Plot the high tides, low tides and slack tides during each successive baseball season and indicate electronically to the River Stakeholders those game start times that are most likely to overlap with slack tides, where river activity might be more frequent.

Operational Plan

The following operational elements will be implemented (at a minimum) as part of the requested modification to the bridge opening schedule for weekday evening baseball games:

- Include Police Officer/Traffic Control Personnel at key intersections on both the north and south sides of the Miami River to facilitate game day traffic operations during both the pre-game and post-game timeframes.
- Manage the pedestrian traffic flow on the NW 12 Avenue Bridge during both the pre-game and post-game timeframes to expedite the clearance of the bridge during a necessary bridge opening for Tugs or Tows.
- Work with Miami-Dade County to refine the signal timing to assist in the pre-game and post-game traffic signal progression.

Proposed Modification Language which Reduces Impacts to the Marine Industry

Title 33: Navigation and Navigable Waters
[PART 117—DRAWBRIDGE OPERATION REGULATIONS](#)
[Subpart B—Specific Requirements](#)
[Florida](#)

§ 117.305 Miami River.

(a) *General.* Public vessels of the United States, tugs, tugs with tows, and vessels in a situation where a delay would endanger life or property shall, upon proper signal, be passed through the draw of each bridge listed in this section at any time.

(b) The draws of the S.W. First Street Bridge, mile 0.9, up to and including the N.W. 27th Avenue Bridge, mile 3.7 at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 7:35 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. to 5:59 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, the draws need not open for the passage of vessels.

(c) The draws of the Miami Avenue Bridge, mile 0.3, and the S.W. Second Avenue Bridge, mile 0.5, at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 7:35 a.m. to 8:59 a.m., 12:05 p.m. to 12:59 p.m. and 4:35 p.m. to 5:59 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, the draws need not open for the passage of vessels.

(d) The draw of the Brickell Avenue Bridge, mile 0.1, at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday except Federal holidays, the draw need open only on the hour and half-hour. From 7:35 a.m. to 8:59 a.m., 12:05 p.m. to 12:59 p.m. and 4:35 p.m. to 5:59 p.m., Monday through Friday except Federal holidays, the draw need not open for the passage of vessels.

(e) On days when the Ballpark has scheduled weekday evening games, the draws of the N.W. 12th Avenue Bridge, mile 2.0 at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 6:46 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the draws need not open for the passage of vessels.

[CGD07-03-118, 69 FR 7688, Feb. 19, 2004]