

Boaters Bumped from Burnham Harbor for Summits

By [Natalie Martinez](#) Monday, Feb 20, 2012 Updated 6:24 PM CST

Security for a pair of international summits is causing major frustrations for more than 1,100 boat owners.

The Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard recently informed boaters that Burnham Harbor is off limits for most of May. The problem? Many of those boaters have already handed over thousands of dollars for a slip on the lake.

"I understand they have to do this. It's got to be done. I got that," said Clarendon Hill's Sam Martel, who paid \$7,000 for mooring fees for 180 days. "So you get a choice of either moving to another harbor, or why don't we get a rebate for next year?"

In correspondence with Westrec Marinas, the company contracted by the Chicago Park District to run the harbor, Martel was told he didn't get the notice from the Coast Guard with his payment invoice -- due by Feb. 15 -- because the park district didn't get the order until recently.

The harbor at 31st Street is their temporary option.

"It's brand new. We're not sure of it. I have kids. We like Burnham. It's the harbor that we picked. We had to wait a long time, three years, [to get a slip]," said Martel.

Martel said owners of large boats don't want to move their boats back and forth because they're not being reimbursed for crew costs or even bigger losses at the Harbor Yacht Club.

"It's going to affect our club too because now this shuts our club down, and we have to pay dues every month, and we have to staff this club," he said. "None of our boaters are going to be able to utilize that club and it's going to affect our bottom line."

Martel said the NATO and G8 summits have been talked about for some time, and boaters at Burnham shouldn't be left with footing the bill.

"It's kind of dirty tactics to tell people after they've paid," he said.

The park district said Westrec will meet with boating groups to address their concerns.

Source: <http://www.nbcchicago.com/blogs/ward-room/nato-g8-summits-burnham-harbor-boaters-139760623.html#ixzz1n98Ogrbt>