



**Board of Commissioners of Cook County**

**Environment and Sustainability Committee**

**Wednesday, April 26, 2023**

**11:00 AM**

**Cook County Building, Board Room,  
118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois**

**NOTICE AND AGENDA**

There will be a meeting of the Committee or Subcommittee of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County at the date, time and location listed above to consider the following:

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Authorization as a public speaker shall only be granted to those individuals who have registered to speak, with the Secretary, 24 hours in advance of the meeting. To register as a public speaker, go to the meeting details page for this meeting at <https://cook-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> to find a registration link. Duly authorized public speakers may speak live from the County Board Room at 118 N. Clark Street, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL or be sent a link to virtually attend the meeting and will be called upon to deliver testimony at a time specified in the meeting agenda. Authorized public speakers who are not present during the specified time for public testimony will forfeit their allotted time to speak at the meeting. Public testimony must not exceed three minutes; the Secretary will keep track of the time and advise when the time for public testimony has expired. After each speaker has completed their statement, they will be removed from the meeting. Once removed, you will still be able to follow the proceedings for that day at:

<https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings> or in a viewing area at 69 W. Washington Street, 22nd Floor Conference Room F, Chicago, IL. Persons authorized to provide public testimony shall not use vulgar, abusive, or otherwise inappropriate language when addressing the Board; failure to act appropriately; failure to speak to an item that is germane to the meeting, or failure to adhere to the time requirements may result in expulsion from the meeting and/or disqualify the person from providing future testimony. Written comments will not be read aloud at the meeting, but will be posted on the meeting page and made a part of the meeting record.

**23-2385**

**COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes from the meeting of 02/08/2023

[23-1939](#)

**Sponsored by:** ANTHONY J. QUEZADA, ALMA E. ANAYA, BRIDGET DEGNEN, FRANK J. AGUILAR, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, DENNIS DEER, BRIDGET GAINER, MONICA GORDON, BRANDON JOHNSON, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE, JOSINA MORITA, KEVIN B. MORRISON and MAGGIE TREVOR, Cook County Board of Commissioners

**PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE TO FILE 23-1939**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR FURTHER FEDERAL ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONNECTION WITH NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORPORATION'S OPERATIONS**

**WHEREAS**, on the 3rd day of February 2022, a Norfolk Southern freight train carrying toxic chemicals derailed in the municipality of East Palestine, State of Ohio, in a residential area bordering the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The catastrophic incident ignited a fire that covered the town in toxic smoke; and

**WHEREAS**, in fear of a major explosion, authorities created an evacuation zone near the crash and carried out a controlled release of toxic chemicals to neutralize burning cargo inside some of the train cars; and

**WHEREAS**, five of the aforementioned train cars were carrying vinyl chloride, an industrial chemical used to make hard plastic that is classified by the National Cancer Institute as a "cancer-causing substance;" and

**WHEREAS**, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, hazardous materials including butyl acrylate, ethylhexyl acrylate, and ethylene glycol monobutyl ethers, were transported inside the train cars, and were likely released into the air, surface soil, and surface waters; and

**WHEREAS**, after being permitted to return to their homes by the local authorities, residents in the crash zone reported feeling sick with including but not limited to headaches and sore throats while continuing to smell a strong chemical odor; and

**WHEREAS**, the collateral damage from this incident to the environment, the local ecosystem and both the human and animal populations will not be known for some time; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Josh Shapiro of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania denounced Norfolk Southern Corporation for its failure to report the crash to the state authorities as was required by law, and instead learned of the derailment independently in the hours after it occurred. This created confusion within the state's emergency management system, risking the health and safety of first-responders; and

**WHEREAS**, two federal lawsuits have been filed against Norfolk Southern Corporation in the State of

Ohio and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for negligence; and

**WHEREAS**, dozens of Norfolk Southern employees have reportedly warned the company of possible safety hazards influenced by the corporation's recently adopted Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) management approach. According to press accounts of the recent United States Senate hearing on the derailment, since approximately February 2019, Norfolk Southern has prioritized the movement of trains on fixed schedules out of terminals and rail yards while arguably scaling back on safety inspection times and personnel to move more freight at a lower cost; and

**WHEREAS**, some experts contend that PSR and staffing are proximate issues to be assessed in railway safety nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, Norfolk Southern reported record profits of \$4.8 billion from operations in 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released its preliminary report on the investigation of the derailment and found that the workers were not at fault, and that this accident could have been prevented; and

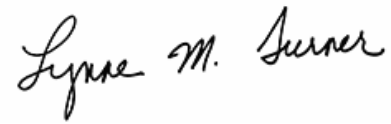
**WHEREAS**, since the date of the derailment, there have been multiple train derailments across the United States of America, and the most recent happened again in Ohio by another Norfolk Southern train.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County President and Board of Commissioners does hereby request the United States Department of Transportation investigate its regulatory approach to our national rail system; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cook County President and Board of Commissioners does hereby call for the Norfolk Southern Corporation to cooperate with the appropriate state and federal agencies to improve their safety standards for workers, residents living along the rail lines and incorporate policies and procedures that focus on prevention of future derailments; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, suitable copies of this resolution will be sent to the United States Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C. and to the Norfolk Southern Corporation in the City of Atlanta, State of Georgia.

**Legislative History :** 3/16/23 - Board of Commissioners - refer as substituted to the Environment and S



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Secretary

Chair: Degnen

Vice-Chair: Morita

Members: Britton, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Trevor