



**Board of Commissioners of Cook County
Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee**

11:15 AM

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Degnen, Morita, Britton, Miller, K. Morrison, Trevor and Vásquez (7)

A motion was made by Commissioner Britton, seconded by Commissioner K. Morrison, to allow for remote participation in meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Degnen, Morita, Britton, K. Morrison, Trevor and Vásquez (6)

Absent: Miller (1)

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Chairwoman Degnen asked the Secretary to the Board to call upon the registered public speakers, in accordance with Cook County Code.

1. George Blakemore- Chicago
2. Zoe Leigh- Chicago flips Red

26-1425

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the meeting of 01/14/2026.

A motion was made by Commissioner Britton, seconded by Commissioner Trevor, to approve 26-1425. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Degnen, Morita, Britton, Miller, K. Morrison, Trevor and Vásquez (7)

26-1239

Sponsored by: JOSINA MORITA, FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BILL LOWRY, DR. KISHA E. McCASKILL, DONNA MILLER, STANLEY MOORE, KEVIN B. MORRISON, SEAN M. MORRISON, TONI PRECKWINKLE (President), MICHAEL SCOTT JR., TARA S. STAMPS, MAGGIE TREVOR and JESSICA VÁSQUEZ, Cook County Board Of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE CHICAGO AREA WATERWAY SYSTEM ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

WHEREAS, The Chicago Waterway System (CAWS) comprises approximately 76.1 miles of canals and modified natural rivers, which encompasses a diverse landscape of prairies, woodlands, savannas, and wetlands as well as industrial, residential, and commercial developments; and

WHEREAS, the CAWS is home to a variety of wildlife, including larger animals such as coyotes and deer, as well as small aquatic plants like duckweed, which is considered one the smallest flowering plants in the world; and

WHEREAS, the CAWS is one of the most closely monitored urban river systems in the United States, with a special thanks to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD); and

WHEREAS, since 1974, monitored fish populations in the CAWS have shown substantial increases in species diversity, from 10 species in 1974 to 77 species in 2026, reflecting significant improvements in water quality and aquatic habitat; and

WHEREAS, despite the collaborative research efforts with partner organizations and an increase in native fish abundance and species diversity, the historic contamination from Chicago's industrialization has affected sediment in certain areas of the CAWS, in locations such as south fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River, commonly known as Bubbly Creek; and

WHEREAS, sediment provides essential habitat and nutrients for benthic organisms, which serve as a foundational food source for fish: these fish, in turn, support wildlife and human populations throughout Cook County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the residents of Cook County, affirm our support for federal, state, and municipal initiatives aimed at addressing legacy pollution, including the remediation of contaminated sediments within the CAWS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Cook County Government.

A motion was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner K. Morrison, to recommend for approval 26-1239. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Degnen, Morita, Britton, Miller, Trevor and Vásquez (6)

Absent: K. Morrison (1)

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Vásquez, seconded by Commissioner Trevor, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Degnen, Morita, Britton, Miller, K. Morrison, Trevor and Vásquez (7)

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget M. Degnen

Lynne M. Surer

Chairman

Secretary

A complete record of this meeting is available at <https://cook-county.legistar.com>.