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February 26, 2024

Honorable Toni Preckwinkle  
and Honorable Members of the Board  
of Commissioners of Cook County  
118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60602

**Subject: Proposed Substitute Ordinance #23-5769 – Coal Tar Sealant Ban**

Dear President Preckwinkle and Members of the Board of Commissioners:

On behalf of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association (IMA) and our nearly 4,000 member companies and facilities across Illinois, I respectfully relay our opposition to the proposed coal tar sealant ban found in substitute ordinance #23-5769. Coal tar sealant is manufactured, distributed, and applied by over 1,000 individuals in Illinois, many of which of those individuals operating in Cook County.

The coal tar sealant industry provides strong, middle class manufacturing jobs in Illinois. Many of the coal tar sealant related jobs in the state are union positions and located directly in Cook County. Any potential ban, even those limited to only one county, not only threatens the jobs of these individuals and the livelihood of the facilities they work for, but could also lead to financial impacts on schools, government agencies and facilities, businesses of every sector and basic consumers looking to seal their driveways.

The men and women working hard to produce coal tar sealant understand that it is a safe and effective product that is the gold standard in the pavement field. A ban of coal tar sealants will decrease the life of asphalt pavements, especially in a state like Illinois where each season brings a variety of weather patterns that can break down asphalt pavements. A ban of coal tar sealants would lead to constant repairs and replacements of asphalt pavements, leading to a negative environmental impact on the community and increased costs. An increase in asphalt replacement, overlayments, and total replacements will require more crude oil to manufacture the asphalt, more rock extracted from rock quarries, and more fuel to manufacture asphalt and raw materials and transport those materials.

It must also be stressed that coal tar sealant has not been shown to have a direct negative impact on the environment. Only one dated scientific analysis out of Texas has been used to push a ban on coal tar sealant, even though the analysis is fundamentally flawed. Instead, emphasis should focus on the fact that coal tar sealant has never been classified as a hazardous material by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). In fact, leading federal regulatory bodies such as the USEPA, OSHA, FDA and

others, have never taken steps to ban coal tar sealant and, under President Obama's Administration, the USEPA lowered its risk assessment on Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) by 7-fold.

Referencing PAHs is important as a heavy focus of the coal tar sealant ban discussions have been on PAHs, despite there being no direct evidence that coal tar sealant leads to an increase in exposure to PAHs by humans. All humans are exposed to PAHs on a daily basis from a variety of sources with no known adverse consequences to human health. Studies have consistently found that traffic-related emissions, not runoff from pavement sealed with refined coal tar-based sealer, are the primary source of all PAHs in the urban environment.

For the reasons described above, I respectfully request that you reject Proposed Substitute Ordinance #23-5769.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Griffith', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Donovan Griffith  
Vice President of Government Affairs