



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY
Cook County Building, Board Room, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois

Third New Items Agenda

for the

Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, December 17, 2014, 11:00 AM

15-0789

Sponsored by: LARRY SUFFREDIN, County Commissioner

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN AND RESTORE THE UNITED STATES CLEAN WATER ACT

WHEREAS, the Clean Water Act is the fundamental federal law protecting the waters of the United States from pollution, degradation and destruction; and

WHEREAS, the United States' Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers have proposed regulations to improve the Clean Water Act; and

WHEREAS, Cook County includes numerous navigable waters, including the Chicago River, Calumet River, Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal; and

WHEREAS, critical streams and wetlands which supply drinking water, protect against floods and filter pollution were previously protected under the Clean Water Act but federal policy changes over the last decade have left these streams and wetlands vulnerable to degradation or destruction; and

WHEREAS, these vulnerable waters of the United States impact sources of drinking water for over 117 million Americans, including more than 1.68 million Illinoisans; and

WHEREAS, strong federal standards are needed because our water systems crisscross our cities, states and countries and the actions of each affects the others; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence has confirmed that headwater streams and wetlands significantly affect the quantity and quality of water in larger bodies of water downstream and provide a wide variety of beneficial ecosystem services, including protection from flooding; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers have proposed a rule to restore protection for streams and wetlands previously protected under the Clean Water Act, safeguarding water quality in the nation's waters, protecting jobs in businesses that depend on clean water and safeguarding drinking water for one in three Americans; and

WHEREAS, the proposed regulations would greatly improve the quality of water throughout the United States, which provide an extraordinary value for the protection of public health, recreational resources, economic livelihood and are a treasured resource; and

WHEREAS, the rule provides greater efficiency, clarity and predictability to the Clean Water Act, leading to more compliance, easier permitting and a greater understanding of the regulations.

WHEREAS, the proposal leaves in place all agricultural exemptions and creates new exemptions for agricultural practices related to conservation; and

WHEREAS, Cook County has a vested interest in protecting the quality and quantity of the small streams and wetlands that protect residents from flooding and provide habitat in our Forest Preserves;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Cook County, Illinois supports the proposed *Definition of "Waters of the U.S." Under the Clean Water Act* and urges the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers to finalize these important protections for our nation's water resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, the Secretary to the Board shall prepare and deliver a suitable copy of this Resolution to the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Commanding General of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Senators Dick Durbin and Mark Kirk, and each Member of the Cook County Congressional delegation.