

**APPOINTMENT HEARING FOR THE POSITION OF CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MARCH 11, 2015**

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL JASSO BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

Thank you Chairman Suffredin and Board of Commissioners.

I first want to thank President Preckwinkle for considering me for this position. I have already been privileged to serve as the Director of the Cook County Department of Planning and Development (DPD) over the past year and one-half. I now am both humbled and enthused to be afforded the opportunity to continue that service in the role of Bureau Chief for Economic Development. I also want to thank my immediate predecessor Herman Brewer for the great work he did in addressing many of the legacy challenges related to responsible grants management within the Department of Planning and Development, revitalizing the County's role in economic development and launching the creation of the Bureau of Economic Development.

As I have had the opportunity to meet with all of the Commissioners prior to this hearing and share my background both formally and informally, I will not spend much time elaborating on my personal and professional background other than the following. I am a native Chicagoan and Cook County resident having grown up in the Back of the Yards neighborhood in Chicago and attended St. Lawrence High School in Burbank. I attended Princeton University where I studied Architecture and the University of Texas at Austin where I received an MBA. I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Sana'a, Yemen working on the restoration and redevelopment of a several hundred year-old commercial trade building in a several thousand year-old City. Professionally I have been fortunate to learn and explore the role of public service in economic development in three of the most dynamic environments within the United States, that being Chicago, Washington, DC and now Cook County.

Continue the Progress Made to Date

In taking on this role, I very much plan to build on the work of capacity building, responsible grants fiscal management and economic outreach undertaken by the Bureau since the President took office. Over the past year, the Department of Planning and Development has expended considerable resources and effort in undertaking its 5-year Consolidated Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies entitled Planning for Progress. Much of our work moving forward will focus on its implementation. This implementation will target the use of our CDBG, Home and ESG dollars in ways that we hope will deliver the biggest impact in terms of economic empowerment and opportunity across our communities, and most specifically, those most in need. Additionally, over the next 5-years, the \$88 million of CDBG Disaster Recover (CDBG-DR) funding will play a major role in our investments in suburban Cook County. In striving to foster development and job creation, we will continue the use of targeted tax incentives while pursuing ways to ensure that these incentives meet those objectives. We will also expand the use and leverage of non-traditional development tools such as our Built-in-Cook Loan Fund. I believe that the use of these tools will be important throughout the County, not least being addressing needs in unincorporated Cook County as we continue to strive for the incorporation of these areas into adjoining communities.

Lead in Regional Growth Collaboration

It is the President's vision and my goal that Cook County will continue to play a more major role in regional growth efforts. This has most recently been the collaborative work we have undertaken with

the 6 collar counties and the City of Chicago to: 1) expand export activity by the companies of the region; 2) streamline the barriers to transporting goods across the region; and 3) support the sustainability and growth of the regions's vast metals industries cluster. Additionally, on the horizon I see opportunities to work together on creating resilient and sustainable communities, promote greater Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and better market the region collectively.

Develop and Implement Strategies to Drive Regional Growth Directly into Cook Communities

Finally, while it is important that Cook County be a leader in promoting growth and investment across the broader metro region, it is incumbent on the Bureau to make certain that such efforts actually benefit individual communities and residents within Cook County. A major effort therefore over the next few years will be to translate the work in Planning for Progress and efforts on Regional Growth to directly improving the economic vitality and livability of our communities. This is not something we will do alone, but very much in cooperation with our over 130 communities, institutions such as the Cook County and South Suburban Land Banks, State and Federal Agencies, elected officials such as this Board, public and private organizations, businesses and many others far too numerous to name.

This is just some of the opportunity and work that I see before the Bureau. Under the leadership of President Preckwinkle, I and all the staff of the Bureau, look forward to working with you towards a better and economically stronger Cook County.

In closing, I want to thank you very much for your consideration and my enthusiasm in working with each of you.