



## **TESTIMONY TO COOK COUNTY PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE BUDGET**

**OCTOBER 31, 2017**

Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Reggie Greenwood, executive director of the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation, representing 40+ communities and approximately 100 investors within southern Cook County. I'm here today on behalf of the CSEDC and for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, which CSEDC represents on Economic Development Projects.

The South Suburban Mayors and Managers and the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation want to express our appreciation for the hard work and efforts of the Cook County Board of Commissioners as they struggle to support the needs of municipalities, residents, and businesses while working to balance the County's budget. I want to specifically express my support for the County's Bureau of Economic Development, Bureau of Environment, Bureau of Technology and Department of Transportation and Highways. All of these offices have been important partners of ours and our south suburban communities. The County's staff have assisted us on many challenging initiatives in an integrated fashion, working across silos for the betterment of the south suburbs. They continue to provide technical assistance and support to us directly, and to our member communities, seeking to reenergize our collective localized economy and advance projects off the drawing board and into implementation and local successful initiatives.

For example, the County and their Bureau of Economic Development has worked with us and developed tools that will help expand the economy of the Chicago Southland. We applaud the County's establishment of Industrial Growth Zones for real estate used for industrial purposes located within certain enterprise zones, including the Cal-Sag Enterprise Zone, Calumet Enterprise Zone, Will-Cook Enterprise Zone, and Lincoln and 394 Corridor Enterprise Zone. This designation provides additional incentives to support new economic growth in areas in need of industrial development or redevelopment in the Chicago Southland. With these tools we anticipate significant new investment in our south suburban region and the Bureau of Economic Development is a critical partner to our success.

The Department of the Environment has partnered with the SSMMA and CSEDC, as well as individual municipalities, to address longstanding contaminated brownfields within our communities. The south suburbs are home to many brownfields that remain a challenge to redevelop. The Dept. of Environment is working with us to identify and secure resources for testing, assessment, and remediation, critically needed to ensure that these contaminated sites are cleaned up and transformed to their best and highest uses. Notably, the large number of brownfields in our communities affect the health and welfare of residents and families, and impede redevelopment. Unfortunately, most of these communities have little to no resources to conduct expensive cleanups themselves but for the partnership available

through the County. It is why it's so important that we preserve these functions within County Government.

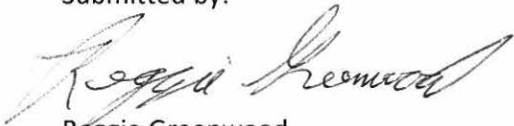
The Department of Transportation and Highways (DOTH) is another division of County government that is leveraging resources to the betterment of communities. Not only through their new Invest in Cook grant program where they are assisting communities directly on projects, but they have also been instrumental in improving the quality of strategic planning, improving local, regional and county transportation planning results on the ground. The Department has been particularly active in leading infrastructure investments that are critical to leverage private sector investment. Their work has led to millions of dollars of private investment by companies such as LB Steel and Sterling. Our communities now plan for safe streets AND access to transit and walking and biking needs, and look to prioritize infrastructure investment that leverages private sector investments and economic development objectives.

Finally, the County's Bureau of Technology has been a partner of a Geographic Information System initiative for several years, helping SSMMA bring state of the art technologies and tools for planning and economic development to resource-strapped communities.

Unfortunately, without the partnership of the County, too many of our south suburban communities would just have to do without and their economic potential would not be realized. On behalf of the SSMMA, we urge you to consider the needs of municipalities, our businesses, and residents and recognize all the worthy programs, technical assistance, and support our County government provides so that together we can grow our local economy and create more opportunities for ALL the region's residents.

Thank you.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Reggie Greenwood", written in a cursive style.

Reggie Greenwood

Executive Director

Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation