

**PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE TO FILE 21-2116
(County Board Meeting – New Items 3/18/2021)**

Sponsored by: BRIDGET DEGNEN, Cook County Board of Commissioners

A RESOLUTION URGING THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PASS THE CLEAN ENERGY JOBS ACT, HB 0804

WHEREAS, the majority of Americans believe in documented and peer-reviewed science that shows climate change is largely attributed to increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels, leading to a change in global and regional climate patterns; and

WHEREAS, humankind is experiencing the consequences of the 1°C increase resulting in extreme weather, significant air pollution, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, decreased crop production, along with many other devastating changes; and

WHEREAS, Cook County has experienced the effects of climate change, from its rising lakefront that caused Mayor Lightfoot to call for federal disaster designation, to the heavy rainfall that delayed our farmers' growing season in 2019 and reduced both the quantity and quality of crops able to be harvested; and

WHEREAS, climate change leads to an increase in pandemics, like the current COVID-19 pandemic resulting in negative health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, climate change depresses economic development and widens income inequality;

WHEREAS, combatting global warming requires an elimination of the use and burning of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, Cook County Commissioners passed a resolution on January 24, 2019, pledging that Cook County Government and the Forest Preserves of Cook County will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and will reach net zero emissions by 2050. These goals are based on findings of the International Panel on Climate Change from 2018 and are the greenhouse gas reduction targets necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the County has released its Clean Energy Plan documenting how the County will reach its greenhouse gas reduction goals and use 100 percent renewable electricity in County facilities by 2030; and

WHEREAS, equity is a core commitment of County Government; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 2019, the Clean Energy Jobs Act (“CEJA”) SB2132/HB3624 was introduced into the Illinois House of Representatives and aims to put Illinois on the path to 100% renewable energy, while growing the clean energy economy in a way that expands equitable access to public health, safety, a cleaner environment, and quality jobs and economic opportunities; and

WHEREAS in February of 2021, CEJA HB0804 was reintroduced with a new emphasis on accountability and ethical practices of utility providers; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Energy Jobs Act (“CEJA”) would ensure that not only Cook County, but all of Illinois reaches 100% renewable energy by 2050 and reaches a carbon-free power sector by 2030. CEJA would build more than 40 million solar panels and 2,500 wind turbines across Illinois, by 2030, providing clean, renewable, cost effective energy for Illinois residents, while creating clean energy careers across the

state. It would create infrastructure to electrify the transportation sector; and

WHEREAS, CEJA will create clean energy jobs in fossil fuel dependent communities throughout Cook County and Illinois. CEJA calls for the creation of Clean Energy Empowerment Zones that will promote renewable energy job development through mechanisms including tax incentives, as well as a “Displaced Energy Worker Bill of Rights” for workers who have lost their jobs due to the transition to renewables. Displaced workers under CEJA are eligible for “financial advice, continued health care and retirement packages, and full tuition scholarships at Illinois state and community colleges and trade programs;” and

WHEREAS, CEJA will ensure that the transition to renewable energy is grounded in equity through, among other measures, creating a Clean Jobs Workforce Hub to support and provide quality clean energy jobs to small, BIPOC clean energy businesses and contractors, ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities created by CEJA; and

WHEREAS, CEJA reforms capacity markets in a way that creates significant savings for Illinois consumers and avoids the purchase of unnecessary fossil fuels. CEJA not only prioritizes clean power procurement by the State but also expands energy efficiency programs that would create net savings for electricity customers. CEJA eases the way for expansion of community solar to help renters and others who cannot make an up-front investment in solar energy, allows for the creation of an on-bill financing program for clean energy for those with low or no credit scores, and increases consumer protections for energy customers; and

WHEREAS, CEJA will lead to healthier communities by improving air and water quality through expanding access to clean energy careers, building wealth in disadvantaged communities, and ensuring new opportunities to continue building a new clean energy economy;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County urge the Illinois General Assembly to pass the Clean Energy Jobs Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in furtherance of this resolution, the Cook County Clerk shall submit a certified copy of this resolution to elected officials at the state level and request that all relevant support and assistance in effectuating this resolution be provided.