



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #: 23-1092, Version: 2**

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**PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE TO FILE 23-1092  
(Environment and Sustainability Committee 2/8/2023)**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**WHEREAS**, Cook County Government plays a vital role in improving the environment and quality of life for all residents of Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, Environmental Justice raises awareness of the relationship between the environment and systemic racism; and

**WHEREAS**, many areas along Cook County's industrial corridors have become increasingly residential and home to growing immigrant communities and communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by air, land and water pollutants; and

**WHEREAS**, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by environmental injustices that have produced racially disparate environmental health, and socioeconomic outcomes for generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Environmental Justice emphasizes community partnership, empowerment and participation by those most impacted by environmental racism; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County can play a role in repairing past environmental injustices by proactively supporting and investing in environmental justice communities; and

**WHEREAS**, The Environmental Justice Movement has roots in Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Hazel M. Johnson, a Chicago resident who founded People for a Community Recovery and fought environmental racism in her community at Altgeld Gardens, is widely recognized as The Mother of the Environmental Justice Movement; and

**WHEREAS**, Chicago and Cook County has a long history of environmental justice organizing by Black, Latine, Asian American and Native communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County further solidified its commitment to environmental justice as well as advancing health equity and climate justice by passing Resolution 22-3910 and participating in the Justice 40 Initiatives introduced by the federal government; and

**WHEREAS**, Resolution 22-3910 encouraged Cook County to apply for grants for the purpose of advancing the principles of the Justice40 Initiative within Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cook County Board recognizes and respects that environmental justice organizations in Chicago, and across the world, have adopted "Principles of Environmental Justice," as the defining document for the environmental justice movement; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cook County Policy Roadmap details a goal to "ensure environmental justice and a healthy

environment for all people and places”; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2021 Cook County Equity Fund Taskforce Report recommends the development of a Cook County Environmental Justice Policy and climate-resilient investments to address decades of disinvestment in Black and Latine communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the work undertaken by the Cook County Equity Taskforce, the Cook County Policy Roadmap and the engagement in the Justice 40 Initiatives in Cook County further solidify the County’s focus on environmental justice.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Cook County Board of Commissioners endorses the values of environmental justice including *The Principles* of equity, participation, repair and justice to ground our environmental work and guide our overall priorities and investments, including American Rescue Plan Act Funds; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Cook County, led by the Cook County Board President will assess internal policy and procedures to ensure environmental justice is a core element of the County; led by the Cook County Board President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners (County Board), in collaboration with the Cook County Equity Fund Task Force and The Department of Environment and Sustainability; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Cook County, led by the Cook County Board President, will work with communities most impacted by environmental injustice in an effort to prioritize projects that will help address past harms, expand opportunities, improve the local environment and enhance the quality of life in environmental justice communities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Cook County, led by the Cook County Board President, the Environment and Sustainability Committee, the Department of Environment and Sustainability, and the Cook County Equity Fund Task Force, will work with environmental justice leaders and organizations to adopt a Cook County Environmental Justice Policy by the end of 2024.