



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 14-6510, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **A RESOLUTION OPPOSING EXPANSION OF FEDERAL JURISDICTION OVER NON-NAVIGABLE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES**

**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**, we recognize the critical importance of protecting the quality of surface water resources for the protection of health, public safety, economic security, and the environment of the region; and

**WHEREAS**, we support reasonable public investments and work practices that ensure adequate protection of water resources in the area; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Environmental Protection Agency on April 21, 2014 proposed in the Federal Register what is described as a clarification of the legal definition of the term “Waters of the United States”; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed rule provides that tributaries, ponds, drainage ditches, ephemeral streams, and surface depressions which are non-navigable and only carry or hold water on an intermittent basis, are subject to the full range of federal oversight and regulation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and United States Army Corps of Engineers as though they were year-round naturally flowing streams and waters (Part 328-Definitions §328.3); and

**WHEREAS**, in two prior attempts to expand federal jurisdictional waters, *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, 2011 and *Rapanos v. United States*, 2006, the United States Supreme Court reaffirmed the Clean Water Act’s limit on federal jurisdiction at “navigable”; and

**WHEREAS**, the expansion of federal control over local activities within normally dry ditches could significantly impact routine maintenance and repair of County infrastructure, including the installation of signs and culverts, removal of storm debris, cleaning of ditches, mowing, and chemical treatments to remove unsightly vegetation along roads; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed rule would be an unfunded federal mandate and could significantly increase the cost to the County and its citizens without any additional compensation; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed rule would require expensive, time-consuming federal permits in order to develop private or government property near bodies of water, not just those which are navigable; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed rule would give federal agencies de-facto zoning authority and thus would override

the zoning authority granted to the County by the State of Illinois, and

**WHEREAS**, the urgency and seriousness of the proposed rule cannot be overstated.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby urge the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to withdraw the proposed rule of April 21, 2014; 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.