



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 14-1506, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO DESIGNATE & RECOGNIZE THE HISTORIC PULLMAN DISTRICT AS PART OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the historic community of Pullman on Chicago's far southeast side was a company-owned town planned and built in the late 19th century by Chicago businessman and industrialist George M. Pullman, founder of the Pullman Palace Car Company, and includes the area east of Cottage Grove Avenue, from East 103rd Street to East 115th Street; and

WHEREAS, the Pullman community includes scores of restored historic homes and buildings, including the Clock Tower Administration Building and Factory, where the Pullman luxury railroad passenger cars were constructed, and the Hotel Florence, which was built as lodging for visiting businessmen and dignitaries; both of these sites are now owned by the State of Illinois and maintained by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; and

WHEREAS, Pullman's important role in the nation's history was recognized by the National Park Service through its placement on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969 and its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Pullman is renowned as one of America's first and most important model industrial towns and for the seminal role this town played in the nation's urban planning, labor, transportation, architectural, and African-American history; and

WHEREAS, the country's first African-American labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was established and led by the legendary labor leader, A. Philip Randolph, and the men hired by the Pullman Company to work as porters on his sleeping cars; this union was instrumental in the formation and advancement of the African-American middle class in America; and

WHEREAS, the Pullman District was named a Chicago Landmark District on October 16, 1972; and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 8, 1969; and was declared a National Historic Landmark on December 30, 1970; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2013, the Chicago City Council passed a resolution urging Congress to make Pullman a National Historical Park or the President to declare it a National Monument; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield is currently the only National Park designation in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, the United States House of Representatives introduced H.R. 3894 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a Special Resource Study of the Pullman Historic District to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the site as part of the National Park System; and

WHEREAS, a reconnaissance survey is now being undertaken by the National Park Service to evaluate Pullman's significance, suitability, and feasibility as a potential unit of the National Park Service, which would ensure that the historic structures are protected and accessible for all people to experience; and

WHEREAS, more than \$26 million in State and federal funds have been invested in the Pullman State Historic Site for acquisition and stabilization, and a national park designation would capitalize on this investment; and

WHEREAS, as a National Historical Park, Pullman would be a unique gem to add to the City of Chicago's remarkable and noteworthy destination sites for our tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, the local community is highly supportive of and would benefit from a revitalized and better utilized site, with enhanced interpretive and educational programs at the Clock Tower Administration Building and Factory and other buildings to teach about the significance of Pullman and the numerous historic and cultural themes associated with it; and

WHEREAS, the Pullman State Historic Site is vital to the community's cultural and historical identity, but remains underutilized and at risk for deferred maintenance; and

WHEREAS, national parks generate \$31 billion for local economies each year and are shown to invigorate neighborhood historic renovation and spur business growth in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the general consensus is that now is the time for immediate action to develop the site to realize its full potential.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners urges Congress to pass a bill establishing Pullman as a National Historical Park or, alternatively, call upon President Barack Obama to exercise his authority by executive order to designate Pullman as a National Monument; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the Illinois Congressional Delegation, the U.S. National Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis, and U.S. President Barack Obama.