



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 18-6115, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE CURRENT UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AND ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S APPROVAL OF STERIGENICS' OPERATION AND PROTECTING SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY RESIDENTS FROM TOXIC AIR POLLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, a recent federal report shows that some Cook County and DuPage County residents are exposed to “the country’s highest cancer risks from toxic air pollution;” and

**WHEREAS**, according to the report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Sterigenics International Inc. (“Sterigenics”) is emitting elevated levels of a cancer-causing chemical called ethylene oxide in its Willowbrook, Illinois, facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s 2014 National Air Toxins Assessment map shows that residents are exposed to elevated levels of ethylene oxide in and surrounding Willowbrook, including in the Cook County municipalities of Burr Ridge, Indian Head Park, Hinsdale, Willow Springs, Justice, Western Springs, La Grange, La Grange Park and Brookfield; and

**WHEREAS**, the current permit authorizing Sterigenics gives the United States Environmental Protection Agency the authority to declare the facility a threat to public health and seek a court order to immediately shut it down; and

**WHEREAS**, the current permit authorizing Sterigenics gives the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency the authority to declare the facility a threat to public health and seek a court order to immediately shut it down; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to this crisis, Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner stated: “This is not an emergency. This is not a public health immediate crisis;” and

**WHEREAS**, the aforementioned federal report states that ethylene oxide is “highly reactive, readily absorbed, and easily distributed in the human body” and is “carcinogenic to humans;” and

**WHEREAS**, the health of residents in Willowbrook and surrounding communities in Cook and DuPage counties must take immediate priority;

**WHEREAS**, the protection of citizens’ air quality in Illinois must become a priority of the State and local governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency must commence immediate air quality monitoring in Cook and Dupage Counties; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Commissioners of Cook County that the Board does hereby call on the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner to immediately declare Sterigenics’s Willowbrook facilities a threat to public health and seek an immediate court order to shut down the facilities until the company can prove that residents near the facilities are no longer at risk; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners of Cook County requests that the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney examine possible enforcement actions to protect the environment and health the residents of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a written copy of this resolution be sent to the United States Environmental Protection Agency the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner.