



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### CONGRATULATING THE HONORABLE DEBRA SHORE ON HER APPOINTMENT TO THE POSITION OF REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, EPA REGION 5

**WHEREAS**, on October 12, 2021 President Joseph R. Biden named Chicago water executive Debra Shore to head the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 5 Chicago-based Midwest office. In his appointment statement, EPA Administrator Michael Regan noted, "Debra's knowledge and experience on water infrastructure issues, the impacts of climate change, and the protection of the Great Lakes will help her lead Region 5;" and

**WHEREAS**, in supporting her appointment, Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, said Shore's "commitment to correcting decades-long environmental injustices" made her "uniquely suited to serve the Midwest and take on this leadership role in protecting our natural resources for years to come;" and

**WHEREAS**, EPA's Region 5 covers Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin, along with land held by 35 indigenous tribes. The office oversees efforts to clean up the Great Lakes and deals with matters including industrial and agricultural pollution and tainted drinking water. Shore is committed to environmental justice and promised to build morale among employees who felt inhibited from doing their jobs under the former president; and

**WHEREAS**, a native of Chicago, Debra grew up in Dallas. She graduated from Goucher College in 1974 with a degree in philosophy and visual arts and a membership in Phi Beta Kappa. She earned masters' degrees from Johns Hopkins University and Chicago's Columbia College. She lives with her spouse, Kathleen Gillespie, in Skokie, Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, Debra began her career as an investigator for the Better Government Association, one of the first to hold that position. She became an active volunteer in local conservation initiatives, especially helping to restore the forest preserves along the North Branch of the Chicago River. She was the founding editor of *Chicago Wilderness Magazine* in 1997, a quarterly publication devoted to the rare nature of the Chicago region. In 1996, she helped found Friends of the Forest Preserves and began volunteering on political campaigns, helping elect more progressive members to the Cook County Board of Commissioners. In 2003, she was selected to participate in the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership (IWIL), which recruits and grooms Democratic women to run for office; and

**WHEREAS**, Debra was first elected to serve as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) in 2006. With her election, she became the first openly gay nonjudicial candidate to be elected countywide in Cook County. She was re-elected in 2012 and 2018. In the 2012 election, she drew more than one million votes in the general election. (Only Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin and Commissioner Shore have earned more than one million votes as openly lesbian candidates.) The MWRD handles wastewater treatment and stormwater management for more than 5 million residents; and

**WHEREAS**, Debra has been a strong advocate for cleaning up the Chicago waterways and for resource recovery, including the reuse of treated water and the generation of biogas. In recognition of her work, she received the Public Official of the Year Award from the Water Environment Federation in 2013. Illinois Democrats credit Shore with turning the MWRD from a sleepy agency into an environmental force; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to her Cook County elected position, Debra currently chairs the board of the Gay & Lesbian

Victory Institute, a national organization with a mission of achieving full equality for LGBT people by building, supporting, and advancing a diverse network of LGBT public leaders. She was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 2008 and 2012. She also serves on the boards of IWIL, the Great Lakes Protection Fund, and Congregation Sukkat Shalom; and

**WHEREAS**, following her appointment, Shore said that she anticipates implementing Biden and Regan's "bold plans to address climate change, to restore the agency's foundational commitment to environmental justice, and to ensure that decisions are made based on sound science and the law."

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, congratulates Debra Shore on her appointment as Regional Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, recognizing her many accomplishments on which the appointment is based, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions she has made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to the Honorable Debra Shore.