



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARIA PESQUEIRA TO THE FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, as President of Healthy Communities Foundation, Maria Pesqueira leads efforts to advance health equity and ensure residents live in healthy communities; and

WHEREAS, Maria recognizes that healthy communities include nature and protected public lands, and health equity demands that all residents have access to these lands and feel safe and welcome there; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Conservation and Policy Council of the Forest Preserves of Cook County from 2019 through February of 2023, Maria shared both her passion for equity and her expertise in health and human services and cultural awareness to guide efforts to implement the Next Century Conservation Plan; and

WHEREAS, Maria helped develop the Nature-Compatible Recreation position paper which calls upon the Forest Preserves of Cook County to support recreational facilities and programs which provide all residents a connection with nature, oppose new uses which are not aligned with the Forest Preserves' mission, and phases out existing recreational programs and facilities which are incompatible and/or unsustainable; and

WHEREAS, Maria facilitated a meeting with the National Association for Mental Health to help the Forest Preserves explore how its staff can support suicide prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, Maria was a steadfast voice for Native and indigenous people and advocated for co-creating narratives which tell a more complete and complex story of Native Americans and their historical connection to the Forest Preserves; and

WHEREAS, as co-chair of the Forest Preserves' Equity, Cultural Sensitivity, and Inclusion Site Name Task Force, Maria recognized that names are an important part of creating a sense of place and belonging and led efforts to ensure site names throughout the forest preserves contribute to a positive experience for visitors, and that none of the site names are inappropriate or offensive or commemorate an event or an individual whose actions perpetuated inequalities or supported the marginalization of people based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, religion, ability, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that President Toni Preckwinkle along with the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners, General Superintendent Arnold L. Randall, and on behalf of all residents of Cook County, do hereby extend appreciation to Maria Pesqueira for her dedication, contribution, leadership, and outstanding service to the Forest Preserves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be tendered to Maria Pesqueira in recognition of her significant contributions to the Forest Preserves of Cook County.