



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION 15-0531

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF FROZEN GRANT FUNDS AWARDED TO THE FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (the Preserves) has received millions of dollars in crucial funds administered through grant programs operated by the State of Illinois through agencies such as the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA); and

WHEREAS, these state-administered grant programs provide vital funding assistance to local government agencies to protect public lands, increase recreational access, and assist local governments in expanding open spaces, all of which contribute to a region's economic vitality and people's quality of life; and

WHEREAS, these funds have been leveraged by the Preserves to double their impact for the State of Illinois and have allowed for the protection of biologically and culturally significant lands; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners and President Preckwinkle are dismayed by the actions of the State and Governor of Illinois to suspend the payment of recently approved and previously awarded grants to the Preserves and several other public agencies. The Preserves is further dismayed by the State's written requests to halt work on these projects or risk losing the awarded grant funds, a recommendation that is impractical, costly, and has adverse impacts for the nature and people of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the approximately \$4.5 million in Forest Preserves grants suspended by the State includes:

- 1) **Dan Ryan Nature Play & Recreational Development**
IDNR Contract Number: OS 15-1920 - Awarded on 1/3/2015: \$1,063,500; suspended 3/9/2015
- 2) **Dam Modification and Removal - Habitat Restoration**
IDNR Contract Number: 0WR292 - Awarded on 1/9/2015: \$1,500,000; suspended 6/29/2015
- 3) **Tinley Creek Preserves - Villa Santa Maria Land Acquisition**
IDNR Contract Number: 1700977 - Awarded on 4/9/2014: \$904,000; suspended 6/29/2015
- 4) **Sulky Pond Habitat Restoration**
IEPA Contract Number: PC 215003 - Awarded on 9/29/2014: \$31,250; suspended 3/5/2015
- 5) **Powderhorn Greenway - 134th Street Marsh Land Acquisition**
IDNR Contract Number: OS 13-1837 - Awarded on 6/3/2013: \$1,003,000; suspended 3/9/2015
- 6) **Millennium Reserve Invasive Control and Job Training Program**
IDNR Contract Number: USEPA 15-07A - Awarded on 3/15/2015
- 7) Any and all grants to the Chicago Botanic Garden
- 8) Any and all grants to the Chicago Zoological Society

WHEREAS, the suspension of these dedicated grants jeopardizes the State's ability to attract future federal

funding, threatens to waste investments already made by the Preserves into these previously awarded projects, and squanders opportunities to improve the natural and economic resilience of Cook County and the State of Illinois.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Forest Preserve District of Cook County Board of Commissioners, President Preckwinkle and General Superintendent Arnold L. Randall hereby urge Governor Rauner to release the suspension of these grants, as well as the other state funded projects, so that the Forest Preserve District may continue with these critical conservation projects that will contribute positively to the people and nature of Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on behalf of the President and Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners, the Secretary to the Board shall prepare and deliver a suitable copy of this Resolution to Governor Bruce Rauner, IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal and IEPA Director Lisa Bonnett.