



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0128, **Version:** 2

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

TO REACH NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) and Cook County Government strive to be leaders in addressing climate change, and

WHEREAS, both units of government are working to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by the year 2050, a goal that is consistent with attempting to keep global temperatures from increasing more than 2°C over preindustrial temperatures, per the 2012 Doha Amendment to the United Nations Kyoto Protocol; and

WHEREAS, with nearly 70,000 acres of land, the Forest Preserves of Cook County ecosystems play an essential climate change mitigation role by absorbing over 1,544,000 tons of CO₂ annually, and further restoration projects will help sequester even more CO₂; and

WHEREAS, each year, ecosystems within the Forest Preserves already provide \$469 million of ecosystem services including the above mentioned carbon storage and including flood control, water purification and groundwater recharge; and

WHEREAS, in October 2018, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a new study of the impacts of global warming; and

WHEREAS, the report’s findings predict ocean rise of an additional 10 cm with 2°C warming compared to 1.5°C, an arctic free of sea ice in Summer once per decade compared to once per century, complete eradication of coral reefs compared to a 90 percent decline, and the loss of many more ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, in November 2018, the U.S. Global Change Research Program released the U.S. National Climate Assessment, which predicted that climate change could reduce the size of the U. S. economy by 10 percent by the end of the century; and

WHEREAS, an estimated minimum 200 million people around the globe would be subject to inundation from rising seas, and several hundred million more to climate related risks and poverty; and

WHEREAS, the current effects of climate change on Cook County from the warming of over 1°C that has already occurred include increased flooding, heavier rain and snow storms, and more extreme summer heat, all affecting the region’s people and economy; and

WHEREAS, the expected future impacts of global warming in Cook County include threats to food supply from impacts on agricultural crops and livestock; increase of invasive species; wildlife habitat destruction; extinction of native plant and insect species; increased incidence of pests and diseases; vulnerability of water supply and decreased quality of water; threats to infrastructure such as roads, rail, water supply and wastewater management; decreased air quality; threats of global unrest causing homelessness and immigration and disruption of business supply chains and markets; and, threats to many natural habitats and species, among others; and

WHEREAS, the IPCC concluded that limiting warming to 1.5°C is possible, but would require global net human-caused emissions of CO₂ to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero around 2050; and

WHEREAS, limiting CO₂ emissions in the Forest Preserves to these levels would require additional resources and new technologies, and change on an unprecedented scale, including rapid and far-reaching changes in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities, and

WHEREAS, many of the actions required are already underway but would need to accelerate, and action across all fronts will need to proceed as fast as possible; and

WHEREAS, many of the actions required could either save money and resources, or improve other aspects of quality of life and our ability to adapt successfully to the climate change that is already underway; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Forest Preserves of Cook County does hereby adopt the following goal: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a plan shall be developed to achieve this goal, and that progress towards this goal shall be reported by the Forest Preserves of Cook County annually; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that other local government agencies and businesses who interact with the Forest Preserves of Cook County are urged to join with us in adopting this greenhouse gas reduction goal to counter the most harmful effects of climate change.