



**Office of the Cook County Board President
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2014

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**Preckwinkle Highlights County's Sustainability Programs, Policies
On Eve of Annual Earth Hour Celebration**

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle is marking the annual celebration of Earth Hour by highlighting sustainable, energy-efficient projects and initiatives that are high on her administration's agenda.

Chicago's annual Earth Hour "lights out" ceremony is scheduled for tomorrow evening. Major organizers of the event, which will take place this year at the Chicago Cultural Center, include ComEd, the City of Chicago, the World Wildlife Fund and Sony Pictures. During Earth Hour, many government and privately owned buildings throughout the world turn off their non-essential lights for an hour as a symbol of their commitment to the world's environment.

Started in 2007 in Australia by the World Wildlife Fund, Earth Hour is now marked in more than 7,000 cities and villages worldwide. Traditionally the lights in landmarks and prominent buildings are extinguished, such as on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, at Rome's Colosseum and in Chicago, at Navy Pier, the Sears Tower, the John Hancock building and in the theater district.

"Tomorrow we will take just one hour to remind ourselves to lighten and lessen our impact on the scarce resources of our planet," Preckwinkle said. "Here at Cook County, we don't think sustainability is limited to any one event or project. It is a driving force of my administration and will continue to be so."

Initiatives that have been or are being implemented in Cook County include:

- Committing to a reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from County facilities of 80 percent by the year 2050. Since building-related energy use accounts for two-thirds of GHG emissions in Cook County, the County has focused on energy efficiency investments on the

County Jail campus and Cook County Hospital complex. The projects – the largest of their kind ever attempted by a county government – are being funded with energy costs saved.

- The County has released a Request for Proposals for energy performance contracts at its downtown office buildings (118 N. Clark and 69 W. Washington), Provident Hospital, suburban courthouses and its highway district maintenance and headquarters buildings.
- The County's Department of Transportation and Highways has replaced incandescent bulb traffic signals with LED lights, reducing the energy bills for those fixtures by up to 70 percent.
- The County Board in 2012 approved a Demolition Debris Diversion ordinance backed by the Preckwinkle administration that requires contractors to recycle and reuse a substantial amount of the debris created through home demolitions.
- The County Board last December approved a Solid Waste and Recycling ordinance backed by the Preckwinkle administration that grants Cook County the ability to increase recycling, prosecute fly-dumping and reduce the theft of metal and other valuable materials from public and private property.

President Preckwinkle in 2012 also formed a Sustainability Advisory Council to help develop innovative solutions and resources for sustainability programs that foster energy efficiency and decrease pollution. The Council, co-chaired by ComEd President/CEO Anne Pramaggiore and Chris Kennedy, chairman of Joseph P. Kennedy Enterprises and past president of Merchandise Mart Properties Inc., returned its first report last year, which focused on reduction of GHG emissions. Another report from the advisory council is due later this year.

“Since I became County Board President in 2010, I have made sustainability a high priority,” Preckwinkle said. “Earth Hour is an important symbolic gesture that we, in our role as public officials, heartily endorse, and which supports our ongoing efforts to be good stewards of the environment.”

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