



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Room 107
Chicago, IL 60602
www.chicityclerk.com

Legislation Text

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ORDER

WHEREAS, public safety and general welfare in the City of Chicago are served by ensuring that safe water-based leisure activities are available to residents and children; and

WHEREAS, the heat waves during the summer in Chicago create a strong demand for outdoor water recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, public amenities that provide water-based recreational activities enhance the quality of life in communities by providing a safe environment to seek relief from the heat; and

WHEREAS, water-based recreation facilities, including splash pads, spray pools and water playgrounds, provide a haven to the public to cool themselves coupled with recreation without the hazards of free standing water and the associated risks of drowning; and

WHEREAS, in neighborhoods that do not have water-based recreational facilities readily available, the residents, in order to escape the excess heat, often resort to opening fire hydrants to cool themselves; and
WHEREAS, open fire hydrants spray water onto residential streets which entice children to play in a hazardous and unsafe environment; and

WHEREAS, the unauthorized opening results in a myriad of problems for the City from the depletion of the local municipal water supply endangering the availability and source of pressurized water for use by the Chicago Fire Department, hospitals, senior homes, schools and other vital facilities, to traffic hazards and street flooding; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Water Management has reported that open fire hydrants account for a waste of water resources at the rate of 564 gallons per minute, nearly 34,000 gallons per hour; and

WHEREAS, 18,095 fire hydrants were illegally opened in 2010, costing hundreds of thousands of tax dollars in manpower to close the hydrants and loss of water revenue; and

WHEREAS, the following wards had the five highest number of illegally opened hydrants: the 26th Ward had 1591; the 22nd Ward had 1550; the 12th Ward had 1399; the 25th Ward had 1270; and the 14th Ward had 1136; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the 15th Ward had 818; the 20th Ward had 806; the 28th Ward had 781; the 11th Ward had 672; and the 30th Ward had 552 illegally opened hydrants; and

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WHEREAS, the City's ability to respond to incidents of fire and other emergencies is critical to upholding public safety and security; now therefore,

BE IT ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO: ,

That the Department of Housing and Economic Development, in conjunction with the Chicago Park District, is hereby ordered to develop a plan to allocate water recreational facilities, otherwise known as spray parks, throughout the wards with the highest number of reports of illegally opened hydrants across the City's South, West and Southwest sides.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Economic Development and the Superintendent of the Chicago Park District are invited to appear before the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation to testify regarding the continued implementation of the aforementioned water-based recreation facilities and the establishment of a timeframe for the expansion to each of the City's fifty wards.