



# City of Chicago



R2020-291

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 4/22/2020

**Sponsor(s):** Villegas (36)

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Call for United States Congress to enact and fund national water affordability program modeled after Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

**Committee(s) Assignment:** Committee on Economic, Capital and Technology Development

ECON

Chicago City Council  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR FEDERAL FUNDING OF SUSTAINABLE WATER PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, All Chicagoans should have access to clean, safe water at home, which has become especially important given the deadly impacts of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and the safety measures necessary to slow the spread of the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, The need to subsidize and support long-term, sustainable, and affordable access to water and sewerage services to assist low-income residential customers will not end after the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has passed; and

**WHEREAS**, Low-income residents would benefit greatly from a national water and sewerage subsidy program, similar to the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), that would ensure low-income residents have and maintain access to clean water and sewerage services; and

**WHEREAS**, LIHEAP provides approximately \$3.5 billion in federal assistance annually to low-income residents throughout the United States to manage gas and electric heating costs; and

**WHEREAS**, Based on the same realities that led the federal government to recognize the need to support low-income families by subsidizing energy through LIHEAP, it is also time to provide a robust federal subsidy to ensure access to the precious resource of clean, safe drinking water for all; and

**WHEREAS**, Unfortunately, due to the high cost of providing clean, safe drinking water, largely due to the cost of complying with federal regulations, there has been an alarming trend of increasing water rates across the country; and

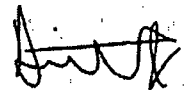
**WHEREAS**, While municipalities are often called upon to become the "water bank" and provide free or subsidized water to their residents, the federal government is the proper entity to fund necessary water subsidies for low-income families, as demonstrated by the success of LIHEAP in making gas and electricity for heating accessible and more affordable; and

**WHEREAS**, Access to clean, affordable water is a public health, safety, and welfare issue, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where practicing good hygiene is more important than ever; and

**WHEREAS**, With adequate federal funding via a water affordability program modeled after LIHEAP, the Department of Water Management will be able to develop broader, more comprehensive, and institutionalized policies to manage the affordability of its services, increase accessibility for all Chicagoans, and reduce the community and public health issues arising out of the provision of water and sewerage services in an urban environment; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this twenty-second day of April, 2020, do hereby call upon the United States Congress to urgently enact and fund a national water affordability program modeled after LIHEAP; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That suitable copies of this resolution shall be prepared and presented to the members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation.



GILBERT VILLEGAS  
Alderman, 36<sup>th</sup> Ward