Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	R2020-1071	
Type:	Resolution	**Status:** Failed to Pass
File created:	12/16/2020	**In control:** City Council
		Final action: 5/24/2023

Title: Call for hearing(s) on Commercial and High-Density Residential Recycling Program

Sponsors: Smith, Michele, Cardenas, George A., Waguespack, Scott, Martin, Matthew J.

Indexes: Environmental Protection & Energy and Ethics & Government Oversight, Inspector General, Streets & Sanitation

Attachments: 1. R2020-1071.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
5/24/2023	1	City Council	Failed to Pass	
2/4/2021	1	Joint Committee: Environmental Protection and Energy; Ethics and Government Oversight	Add Co-Sponsor(s)	
12/16/2020	1	City Council	Referred	

Joint Committee on Ethics and Government Oversight and Environmental Protection and Energy
December 16, 2020 City Council

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A HEARING ON THE CITY OF CHICAGO COMMERCIAL AND HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Recycling is crucial to combating the imminent threat of climate change and the negative impacts non-recycled waste can have on the environment; recycling reduces both the amount of waste sent to landfills and the City's reliance on landfills, which are the third-greatest source of human-generated methane gas in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Methane gas is a powerful greenhouse gas that significantly contributes to climate change by absorbing the sun's heat and warming the atmosphere; the harms caused by climate change include air and water pollution, heat waves, and rising sea levels, all of which put human and animal lives at risk, and are most acutely felt by underprivileged communities; and

WHEREAS, Chicago's challenges with successful implementation of recycling programs have been long documented, beginning in the 1990s when the Blue Bag Recycling Initiative for low-density residential buildings suffered from low rates of participation, recycling bags that reportedly tore and spilled into Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) trucks, and an expensive and ineffective process for separating the recycled material from the garbage; and

WHEREAS, Effective on January 1, 1995, the Workplace and Residential Recycling Ordinance was the City's original ordinance aimed at implementing recycling programs in large buildings and required all building owners and property managers of commercial and high-density residential buildings to establish recycling programs and procure private hauling services; DSS reported that the ordinance lacked clarity and needed stronger enforcement provisions; and

WHEREAS, On January 1, 2017, the Workplace and Residential Recycling Ordinance was replaced by the Chicago Recycling Ordinance (the "Ordinance"), which requires commercial and high-density residential

building owners to, among other things, contract with private waste haulers for recycling services, and authorizes DSS to fine violators based on the length of the violation; the ordinance also sets standards and requirements for private haulers, including requiring them to submit an annual report to DSS each year detailing recycling data and information for the past year; and

WHEREAS, An Office of the Inspector General (OIG) audit of the Commercial and High-Density Residential Recycling Program, published in December 2020, concluded that: DSS does not know which buildings are subject to the Ordinance; enforcement of the Ordinance is solely complaint-based; the City lacks a consistent inspection process and DSS does not track inspection outcomes; and there is no option in the City's Mobile E-ticket System to cite buildings for failure to comply with the Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the audit, OIG recommended that DSS should: configure the Mobile E-ticket System to allow users to issue citations for violations of the Ordinance; consistently record and monitor the outcome of recycling inspections; create a proactive enforcement program; ensure annual reports from private haulers are submitted in a complete, accurate, and timely manner, and capture data necessary to evaluate the program, and that DSS must use this data to calculate the diversion rate; and ensure haulers report customers who decline recycling; and

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WHEREAS, The time is now for Chicago to take action against climate change by stepping up and ensuring that the Chicago Recycling Ordinance is properly implemented and enforced; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this sixteenth day of December, 2020, do hereby call upon the Committee on Ethics and Government Oversight and the Committee on Environmental Protection and Energy to convene a joint hearing on the City's Commercial and High-Density Residential Recycling Program, the Department of Streets and Sanitation's enforcement of the program, and the Office ofthe Inspector General's recommendations to improve enforcement ofthe program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we call upon Inspector General Joe Ferguson or his designee, Commissioner of the Department of Streets and Sanitation John F. Tully or his designee, the Commissioner of Assets, Information, and Services David Reynolds or his designee, the Commissioner of Procurement Shannon Andrews or her designee, and a representative from the City Law Department to testify at the hearing.

MICHELE SMITH Alderman, 43rd Ward
GEORGE CARDENAS Alderman, 12th Ward

SCOTT WAUGESPACK Alderman, 32nd Ward

The following legislation is being introduced by Alderman Michele Smith regarding The Large Building Recycling Program co-sponsored by

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