

# CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL SCORECARD

2021





Dear supporter,

Over the years, the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) has worked to build the power of environmental and environmental justice groups, educate a growing number of decision-makers, and recommend sound environmental policies at all levels of government.

You may be familiar with our long-standing, annual Environmental Scorecard, which helps you measure the effectiveness of your legislators in the Illinois General Assembly. This year, we are excited to have reached a new milestone in our legacy of empowering Illinoisans to hold elected officials accountable for their votes.

For the first time, IEC is publishing a scorecard evaluating the environmental performance of the Chicago City Council.

Why? Because the city of Chicago should be a model for other big cities on environmental protection. Of course, the ordinances passed by alderpersons impact the environment in our neighborhoods, but they can also end up serving as examples for other cities around the globe to follow.

Releasing this scorecard is a necessary push towards accountability for the 50 alderpersons who ultimately set Chicago's environmental laws. Within this report, you will find a mid-term scorecard encompassing two years of alderpersons' four-year terms. It includes a wide range of priorities from clean energy to wildlife conservation to environmental justice.

While this scorecard cannot capture the entire picture of the business conducted by the Chicago City Council or its alderpersons, it'll be a great supplement to better understand the progress they did or did not make over the course of their term.

We would be remiss not to express how grateful we are to the city council alderpersons who have introduced ordinances at the request of IEC or our members and to those who have pushed for environmental protection at the request of their community members.

Thank you for learning more about your elected officials with us! We encourage you to dive into this new tool and keep it at hand when reading the news, engaging with our updates, or reaching out to your representatives' offices.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Walling".

Jennifer Walling  
*Executive Director, Illinois Environmental Council*



# ALDERPERSONS RECEIVING 100% ENVIRONMENTAL SCORES

**1<sup>st</sup> Ward Ald. Daniel La Spata**

**9<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Anthony Beale**

**20<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Jeanette Taylor**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Ward Ald. Michael D. Rodriguez**

**25<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Byron Sigcho-Lopez**

**33<sup>rd</sup> Ward Ald. Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez**

**35<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa**

**39<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Samantha Nugent**

**40<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Andre Vasquez Jr.**

**47<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Matt Martin**

**49<sup>th</sup> Ward Ald. Maria Hadden**



## POWERS AND DUTIES OF CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL ALDERPERSONS: A QUICK OVERVIEW

The Chicago City Council is presided over by the Mayor of Chicago and comprises 50 elected alderpersons who represent communities in Chicago's 50 different wards.

The council proposes, debates, and passes ordinances to regulate city affairs. Any alderperson or citizen can submit an ordinance to the City Clerk's Office. Once assigned to a committee, alderpersons serving on that committee can hold a hearing where they consider public testimony in support or opposition. If an ordinance passes out of the committee, it continues to the full city council for a vote. An ordinance becomes law if a majority of the city council votes in support.

Alderspersons have strong influence within their wards. For example, they can influence the City's Department of Zoning decisions, which can mean the difference between their community getting a new park or a new industrial polluter.

Alderspersons also control the budget for their ward and can allocate funds to bike lanes, park infrastructure and updates, rain gardens, and other green or constituent services that improve the health and well-being of the community and environment. These budgets are often a good window into the values and priorities of each alderperson.

Similarly, the City's overall budget can be a critical tool to support the environment. The budget reflects the City's priorities, and too often, environmental initiatives are last to be included and first on the chopping block. Funding environmental oversight— whether it's by a Department of Environment or a Chief Sustainability Office— polluter inspections, tree canopy protection, parks maintenance, public transit and electric vehicle charging, water infrastructure upgrades, and other programs are needed for Chicago to accomplish its environmental priorities.

When determining if your alderperson is doing enough to protect our environment, consider how they voted when it mattered and how they prioritize the environment within their ward and decision-making.



# EXPLANATION OF SCORING

For each bill, alderpersons are evaluated on whether they voted with the pro-environment position ("+" ) or against it ("-"). For bills that the environmental community supported, a YES vote is a + and a NO vote is a -. For bills that were opposed, a NO vote is a + and a YES vote is a -. The votes are then tallied, and an overall score is calculated. For instance, someone who voted pro-environment on six bills and against four bills is given a 60% score.

The only votes not counted were those when an alderperson had an excused absence (noted in the chart as "A" ), which generally meant that they were not present in city council on that day due to an illness or other unexpected circumstances. Alderpersons who had absences were scored according to the other votes they cast.

When an alderperson is present in city council on the day of a vote but fails to cast theirs, we have counted it the same as a "no" vote on the ordinance. This circumstance is noted in the voting chart as "NV" and counted the same as a "+" when this action supports the pro-environment position. It is indicated as "nv" and counted as "-" when it does not help the pro-environment position.

## ORDINANCE VOTES SCORED

### **SO2020-4590: SUBSTITUTE AIR QUALITY ORDINANCE - OPPOSE**

**Sponsor:** Mayor Lightfoot

Mayor Lightfoot's attempt to increase oversight on industrial developers ultimately maintained procedural barriers that prevent communities from having a meaningful say in the development of their neighborhoods. IEC supported an earlier version of the ordinance that would have required greater oversight but ultimately opposed the final version after developers succeeded in weakening it.

### **SO2020-6200: INCREASED FINES FOR POLLUTERS - SUPPORT**

**Sponsor:** Mayor Lightfoot

Mayor Lightfoot's response to the Hilco Implosion Disaster in April 2020 increases fines and penalties for certain violations of air pollution and emission standards. Violators can face fines of up to \$50,000 for a single offense. It also increases penalties for facilities that fail to obtain operating permits and certificates from \$1,000-\$5000 up to \$5,000 - \$10,000.

### **O2020-136: BIRD-FRIENDLY DESIGN ORDINANCE - SUPPORT**

**Sponsor:** Alderperson Brian Hopkins (2nd Ward)

Amends the Sustainable Development Policy to provide greater weight and priority to strategies that reduce bird mortality resulting from new building construction.

### **SR2019-747: SUPPORT FOR CEJA - SUPPORT**

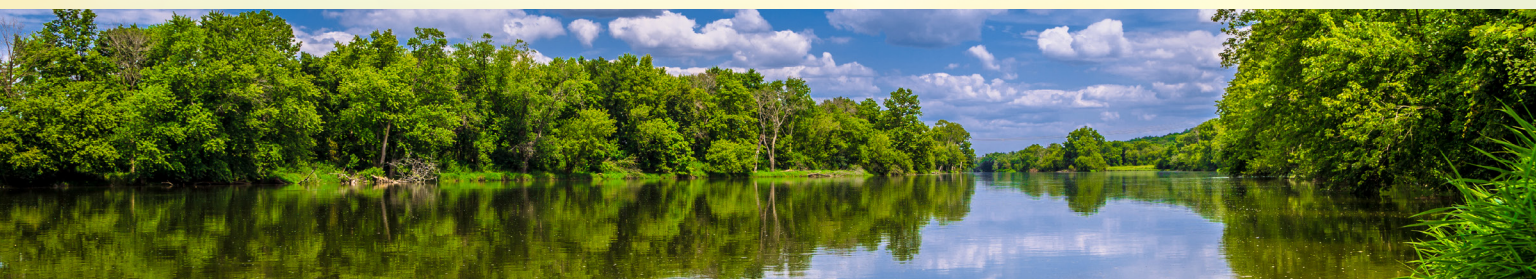
**Sponsor:** Alderperson George Cardenas (12th Ward)

Calls on Governor Pritzker and the Illinois General Assembly to support the passage of the Clean Energy Jobs Act, state legislation establishing an equitable 100% clean energy future for Illinois.

### **R2020-81: DECLARATION OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY - SUPPORT**

**Sponsor:** Alderperson Matt Martin (47th ward)

Declares climate change an emergency and calls for the initiation of a Climate Mobilization Initiative.





## ORDINANCE VOTES SCORED CONTINUED

### **SO2020-3395: NO TAX CREDITS FOR POLLUTERS - SUPPORT**

**Sponsor:** Alderperson Michael D. Rodriguez (22nd Ward)

Creates a mechanism to revoke property tax incentives awarded to "bad actors" who violate multiple local, state, and federal laws. This ordinance was introduced in light of the \$19.7 million incentive awarded to Hilco Redevelopment Partners, the company responsible for the Hilco Implosion Disaster.

### **R2021-225: DENIAL OF GENERAL IRON PERMIT - SUPPORT**

**Citizen Sponsored**

Emergency petition submitted by Southeast side community hunger strikers calling for the denial of the requested permit for a proposed recycling operation at 116th and Calumet River.

### **SO2019-8025: EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE - SUPPORT**

**Sponsor:** Alderperson Brendan Reily (42nd Ward)

Requires all newly constructed residential buildings, with five or more units, and onsite parking and commercial properties, with 30 or more parking spaces, to have 20% of parking spaces Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) ready. All applicable properties must also make at least one of the EVSE-ready spaces accessible to people with disabilities.

## GREEN CHAMPIONS

Green Champions are alderpersons for whom climate change and environmental issues are a legislative priority. Several have introduced or sponsored noteworthy environmental ordinances included in the scoring. Additionally, these alderpersons vote the way IEC and the community recommend on critical environmental measures. Beyond legislation, many engage in and attend environmental town halls and briefings. We want to express our gratitude to the following Green Champions:

**1st Ward Alderperson Daniel LaSpata** for introducing the Water-For All ordinance, which would create a city-wide water affordability program. Additionally, over the last two years, he has co-sponsored over 15 pieces of environmental legislation, including a resolution that calls for the expansion of the City's Drive Clean Program and an ordinance that led to the feasibility study to explore alternative options to the City's existing franchise agreement with ComEd.

**2nd Ward Alderperson Brian Hopkins** for introducing the Native Gardens Registry Ordinance, which would protect Chicagoans who follow sustainable landscaping practices from citations under the current Weeds ordinance by allowing them to register their native plant gardens on their property at no cost.

**25th Ward Alderperson Byron Sigcho-Lopez** for his effort to defend his ward and environmental justice communities broadly from polluters. He has spoken out against the MAT Asphalt and General Iron relocation permitting and has called for an independent investigation into the Hilco Implosion Disaster.

**32nd Ward Alderperson Scott Waguespack** for introducing the Plastics-Free Water Ordinance. This ordinance would reduce single-use plastics and ban polystyrene, protecting drinking water, ecosystems, and public health from plastic pollution.

**43rd Ward Alderperson Michele Smith** for continuing to be an advocate on plastic reduction and conservation of our parks and open space and for introducing resolutions and organizing hearings to shine light on these issues before the city council.

**47th Ward Alderperson Martin** for introducing a resolution that declares a climate emergency and calls on the City to develop a budget that promotes urgent climate action. He has partnered with IEC and our affiliates on numerous occasions to educate himself and constituents on environmental issues.

**49th Ward Alderperson Maria Hadden** for introducing an order calling on the City to report on the costs needed to re-establish the Department of Environment. Additionally, we thank her for her continued support and willingness to vocalize environmental issues during city council and committee hearings.



# CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL VOTING RECORD

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	WARD	S02020-4590 Air Quality - Oppose	S02020-6200 Fines for Polluters - Support	O2020-136 Bird Friendly Building - Support	SR2019-747 CEJA Resolution - Support	R2020-81 Declaration of Climate Emerg. - Support	S02020-3395 No Tax Credits for Polluters - Support	R2021-225 Deny General Iron Permit - Support	S02019-8025 EV Charging Infrastructure - Support	SCORE
Daniel	La Spata	1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Brian	Hopkins	2	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Pat	Dowell	3	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Sophia	King	4	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	87.5
Leslie	Hairston	5	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	87.5
Roderick	Sawyer	6	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	87.5
Gregory	Mitchell	7	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Michelle	Harris	8	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Anthony	Beale	9	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	+	100
Susan	Sadlowski Garza	10	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Patrick	Thompson	11	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
George	Cardenas	12	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Marty	Quinn	13	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Ed	Burke	14	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	87.5
Raymond	Lopez	15	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	87.5
Stephanie	Coleman	16	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
David	Moore	17	-	+	+	+	+	+	NV	+	75
Derrick	Curtis	18	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Matthew	O'Shea	19	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Jeanette	Taylor	20	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	+	100
Howard	Brookins	21	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Michael	Rodriguez	22	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	87.5
Silvana	Tabares	23	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Michael	Scott	24	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Byron	Sigcho-Lopez	25	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Roberto	Maldonado	26	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Walter	Burnett	27	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Jason	Ervin	28	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Chris	Taliaferro	29	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Ariel	Reboyas	30	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Felix	Cardona	31	-	NV	+	+	+	+	+	+	75
Scott	Waguespack	32	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Rossana	Rodriguez Sanchez	33	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Carrie	Austin	34	-	+	+	+	+	+	NV	+	75
Carlos	Ramirez-Rosa	35	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Gilbert	Villegas	36	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Emma	Mitts	37	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Nicholas	Sposato	38	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Samantha	Nugent	39	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Andre	Vasquez	40	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Anthony	Napolitano	41	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Brendan	Reilly	42	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Michele	Smith	43	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Tom	Tunney	44	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Jim	Gardiner	45	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	87.5
James	Cappleman	46	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Matt	Martin	47	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Harry	Osterman	48	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	75
Maria	Hadden	49	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100
Debra	Silverstein	50	-	+	+	+	+	+	NV	+	75

**KEY**

Pro-Environment Vote: +  
Anti-Environment Vote: -

Not Voting + : NV  
Not Voting - : nv

Absent: A

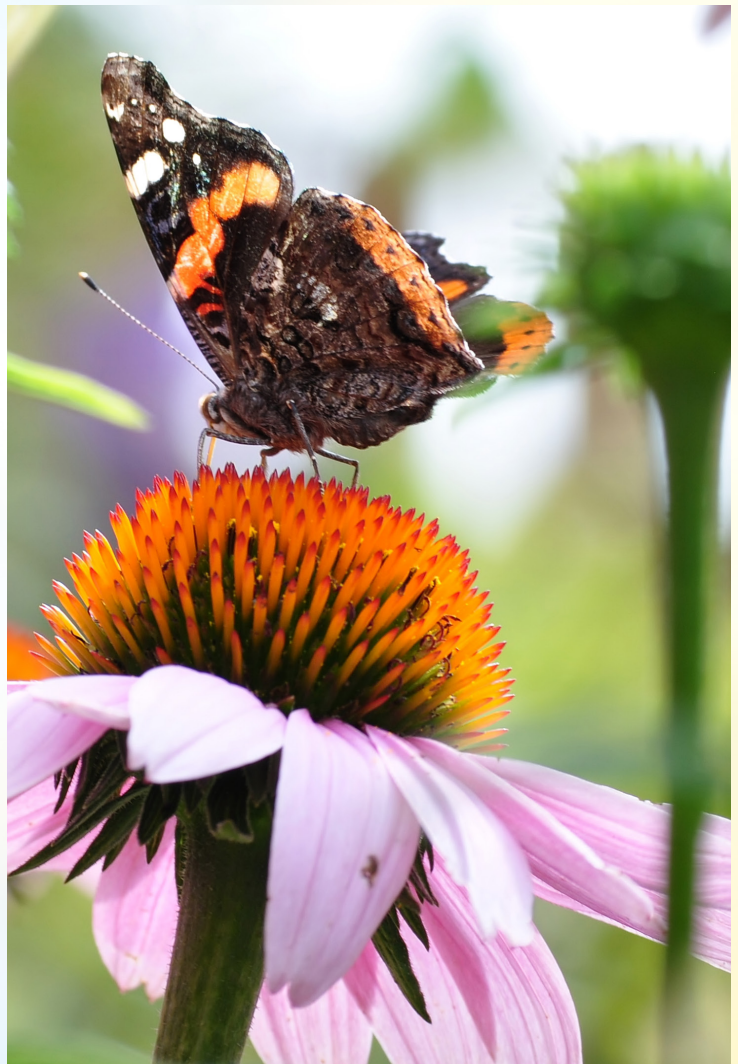


# ABOUT OUR SCORECARD

The Chicago Environmental Scorecard is published by the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) for purposes of public education. It provides a record and analysis of votes in the Chicago City Council on a wide range of environmental and conservation ordinances to create a better-informed citizenry.

No endorsement of any party, elected official, or political candidate is implied in this Scorecard or any other publications or activities of the Illinois Environmental Council. IEC does not make financial contributions to any candidate or political party.

Since 1975, the Illinois Environmental Council has worked to safeguard Illinois—its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends by building power for people and the environment. Representing over 100 environmental organizations in the state, IEC carries out its mission to advance public policies that create healthy environments across Illinois through education, advocacy, and movement building.



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