



LAKE COUNTY

FY2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT LAKE COUNTY.....4
INTRODUCTION.....6
PURPOSE.....8
POSITIONS.....11
STATE Sponsor Initiatives.....12
 Regulation Providing for Environmental Impact Zoning Enabling Authority for all Illinois Counties
STATE Support Initiatives.....13
 Carpet Stewardship Act
 Packaging and Paper Products Extended Producer Responsibility
 Electric Vehicle Charging for Multi-Family Residences
 Amendments to the Illinois Property Exemption for Disabled Veterans
 Superintendent of Public Works Licensure Mandate Removal
 Waukegan Coal Plant Environmental Remediation
FEDERAL Support Initiatives.....18
 Federal Funding for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs)
STATE or FEDERAL Support Initiatives.....19
 Firearm Regulation
Topics of Importance.....20

About Lake County



POPULATION

- Population: 714,342 (2020)
- Third largest county in Illinois

Source: census.gov



HOUSING

- Housing units (2021): 270,019
- Median value of owner-occupied housing units (2016-2020): \$271,700
- Homeownership rate (2016-2020): 73.5%
- Households (2016-2020): 248,684



HEALTH AND RECREATION

- 50,000+ acres of land, offering educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities for all ages
- 40 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline
- 100+ beaches*
- 550 miles of trails and bikeway connections
- 200+ lakes and rivers
- Ranked #2 in Illinois for physical activity and #4 for access to places to be active and healthy

*Source: Lakecountypartners.com,

Source for other statistics: Lake Co., IL Convention & Visitors Bureau

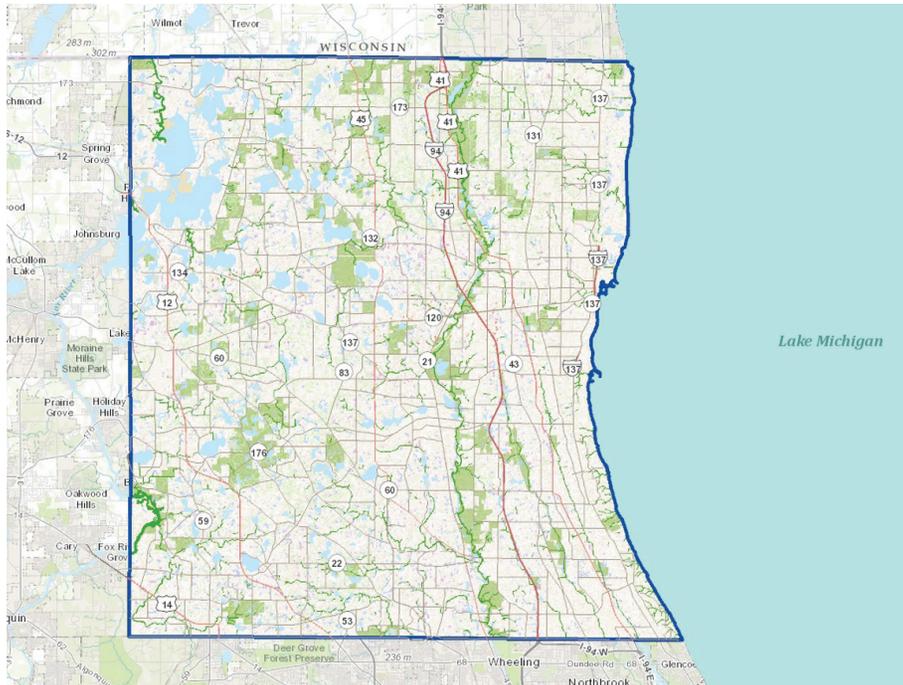


ECONOMICS

- Median household income: \$92,654
- Per capita money income: \$47,223
- Unemployment in Lake County: 4.1%* Illinois: 4.5% (not seasonally adjusted)* U.S.: 3.7% (not seasonally adjusted)*
- 30,000+ businesses (11 Fortune 500 companies)
- 90.8% of residents age 25+ have graduated high school, and 46.1% have a bachelor's degree or higher (2012-2016)

*Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

Source for other statistics: census.gov



- **Land Area: 448 square miles**
- **Halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee**
- **Easy access to Chicago on four Metra commuter rail lines and 32 train stations**
- **Major waterways—Lake Michigan, Fox River, Chain O'Lakes**

INTRODUCTION

Lake County government strives toward fiscally stable, efficient, and transparent operations amidst uncertain political and economic climates. Maintaining strong partnerships with legislators ensures that Lake County residents continue to receive valuable, efficient, and cost-effective services.

As always, the Lake County Board appreciates the opportunity to meet with our legislators to discuss challenges we face as a County. To best address such challenges, Lake County must govern free from the restrictions of various statutes and public acts which slow down the process to ensure a high quality of life for its residents.

Lake County government is cognizant of the current financial environment at all government levels and has prepared the FY2023 Legislative Agenda in that context. As such, this year's Legislative Agenda includes both comprehensive, aspirational items with potential regional or statewide effects as well as specific technical changes that make Lake County government – and in some cases all local governments – more efficient.

The guiding tenets of Lake County's Legislative Agenda are to:

1. Support legislation that grants additional permissive authorities for counties.
2. Support legislation that allows counties to expand non-property tax revenue sources.
3. Support legislation that promotes transparency at all levels of government.
4. Support legislation that encourages cost-effective government consolidation.
5. Support legislation that mitigates inefficiency.
6. Oppose unfunded mandates imposed by the state or federal government.
7. Oppose legislation that would reduce the existing authority of county government.
8. Oppose legislation that erodes existing state-appropriated County revenues.
9. Oppose legislation that weakens the County's ability to consolidate local governmental units and circumvents an existing appeals process.

Specifically, with respect to legislative policy numbers six and eight, Lake County vehemently opposes any action that will divert, redirect, or reduce any funds owed and/or due to units of local government (e.g., sales tax, income tax, and Personal Property Replacement Tax).

Additionally, Lake County's Legislative Agenda is guided by the following values adopted within the County Board's Strategic Plan:

- i. Leadership
- ii. Fiscal Responsibility
- iii. Exceptional Service
- iv. Operational Excellence
- v. Environmental Stewardship

PURPOSE

The intent of Lake County's Fiscal Year 2022 Legislative Agenda is to formalize the County's positions on legislation both anticipated and sought to be considered. Our elected officials may use the Agenda as a guide when considering legislation that would impact Lake County.

This Agenda describes the County's proposed initiatives and/or underlying interest in specific issues. With coordination between the Lake County Board, the County Administrator's Office, the County's legislative consultants, and the Lake County legislative delegation, the agenda explains County initiatives and informs County positions taken on specific bills once the legislative session begins. During session, the County Board may also consider amendments to the Legislative Agenda and adjust its position on bills.

In addition to the Legislative Agenda, Lake County attempts to influence policy through other avenues, such as submitting comments on administrative rulemakings and making direct appeals to administrative officials. While the Legislative Agenda is not intended to direct such action, it serves as a resource to inform important County efforts.

THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA AS A "NIMBLE TOOL"

Members of the Lake County Board agree that the issues described within this Legislative Agenda represent their collective endorsements. The Lake County Board recognizes that many other unforeseen issues will become known throughout the legislative year. While it is important to have approval from the Lake County Board for additional endorsements before any position becomes official, it is also important for the Legislative Agenda to be a "nimble tool" that appropriately supports an ever-changing landscape during the legislative process. As such, the manner in which the Legislative Agenda may be used to adjust and/or react to the fast-paced legislative process is outlined below.

PROCESS TO AMEND LAKE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The County Board may revisit the Legislative Agenda at any point as a body, or through its Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee may be convened on an as-needed basis with the County's legislative consultants and County staff when the following circumstances present themselves:

Legislative action is expected that would significantly impact a County policy and/or operation, which the County Board has previously provided general direction, but which the County Board had not provided specific direction. (This might occur via the Legislative Agenda or other approved policies.) As such, time-constraints may preclude the County Board from having an opportunity to provide the needed direction. In these situations, the County Board Chair, the County's legislative consultant, and County staff may turn to the Legislative Committee for direction on such legislation so that the County can advocate accordingly. The County Board will be informed whenever such Legislative Committee direction has been provided and may choose to revisit such direction at a future meeting.

Amendments to the Legislative Agenda should be adopted with the goal, such that modifications require consistency, when applicable, with the criteria outlined below:

- A. Uniformity with the County Board's Strategic Plan;
- B. Expected relevance in the upcoming or present legislative sessions;
- C. Uniqueness of issue or impact to Lake County;
- D. Viability or likelihood of achieving a goal;
- E. Opportunity for providing or preserving funding for Lake County; and
- F. High probability of metrics of success to allow the position to be removed from future legislative agendas, if achieved.

These criteria, which provide important guidance and direction, are not intended to prohibit departures in unique circumstances as determined by the County Board and/or Legislative Committee, such as when adoption of a County position is important to support its regional partners, even when the legislation is otherwise of limited consequence to the County.

In addition, to accommodate any requests that may arise after approval of the Legislative Agenda, the County Board Chair and County Administrator, or their designee, may periodically provide legislative testimony and/or letters of support or opposition based upon any perceived benefit or detriment to Lake County. In doing so, such testimony and/or letters will be guided by the principles and values stated herein.

To summarize, the process for requesting an amendment to the County's adopted Legislative Agenda is provided below:

Amend the formal Legislative Agenda: The approved County Legislative Agenda may be amended at any point through the Legislative Committee and County Board based on consistency with articulated criteria.

County Position on Specific Legislative Bill(s): The County may take a position on a specific bill through action by Legislative Committee based on significant impact to County policy or operation; County Board is to be informed on such direction, and County Board may revisit thereafter.

How does a member of the Board or standing committee seek a County position on specific legislative bills?

1. attend the Legislative Committee and request that it take a position on a bill; or
2. ask the standing committee, for which the bill's subject is pertinent, to request, on behalf of the Committee, that the Legislative Committee take a position on a bill.

Submission of a witness slip on the County's behalf regarding a specific legislative bill

The County Board Chair, County Administrator, or their designee, County legislative consultant may submit a witness slip on the County's behalf on specific legislation when the County's Legislative Agenda is clear about what the County's position is or following specific action by the County Board or Legislative Committee on a specific bill. Nothing herein prohibits an individual member of the Lake County Board to submit a witness slip on a specific bill in their individual personal capacity.

POSITIONS

1. **Sponsor:** Lake County sponsored initiatives.
2. **Support:** Seek to support partner organizations in their sponsorship of the initiative. These proposals are broad based with impacts that extend beyond Lake County. It is most appropriate for a coalition or statewide organization to lead these initiatives, and Lake County will support their efforts as well as the proposals.

Topic: Regulation Providing for Environmental Impact Zoning Enabling Authority for all Illinois Counties

Issue: The Illinois Compiled Statute, Counties Code does not currently provide Counties the authority to regulate and restrict the location and use of structures on the basis of lessening or avoiding detrimental environmental impacts from such structures including the loss of critical flora and fauna, habitat alteration or destruction, harmful disruption of bird migration, and other outcomes that degrade the local environment. Lake County, as well as other counties in the state, are facing emerging environmental threats including climate change, habitat loss, loss of flora and fauna, and establishment of invasive species. Lake County would benefit by expanding zoning and regulatory authority to mitigate local environmental impacts and adapt to climate change and its associated threats.

Recommendation: Sponsor an amendment to Illinois Compiled Statute, Counties Code, (55 ILCS 5/5-12001) Zoning to enable Lake County (or all IL Counties) authority to regulate and restrict the location and use of structures for the express purpose of lessening or avoiding detrimental environmental impacts from such activities and structures including, but not limited to, loss of critical flora and fauna, habitat alteration or destruction, and harmful disruption of bird migration.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Grants additional permissive authorities

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Operational Excellence

Topic: Carpet Stewardship Act

Issue: In Illinois, there is currently Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation for electronics. EPR allows for an eco-fee on the purchase of items that will be used to subsidize the processing and end use of recycled items. This legislation does not exist for carpet currently. Carpet facing and backing are made of plastic, with calcium carbonate added to give the carpet weight so that it lies flat.

California is the only state that has enacted EPR legislation for carpet. California has proven the business model for Illinois and has achieved over a 15 percent recycling rate for carpet vs. around one percent in Illinois.

Recommendation: Support legislation that creates EPR for carpet products, or bills with similar intent.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Mitigates Inefficiency

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Environmental Stewardship

Topic: Packaging and Paper Products Extended Producer Responsibility

Issue: The Packaging and Paper Products (PPP) bill is an extended producer responsibility bill (EPR) similar to the current laws Illinois has enacted for electronics and pharmaceuticals. The PPP bill would require producers of packaging and paper products to develop and implement strategies that promote reuse, recycling, and post-consumer recycled content for covered materials. Producers are prohibited from selling or distributing any covered materials into the state unless they have an approved producer responsibility plan. Producers can comply with the law individually or by joining a producer responsibility organization (PRO). The program will also create a funding mechanism to cover the costs of the program or reimburse municipalities for partaking in the program. The funding mechanism will include incentives to reward producers for packaging and paper products that reduce waste, increase reuse and recyclability, remove toxics, and include post-consumer recycled content.

Recommendation: Support the Packaging and Paper Products Bill

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Mitigates Inefficiency

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Leadership
- Environmental Stewardship

Topic: Electric Vehicle Charging for Multi-Family Residences

Issue: Electric vehicles are an important tool to fight the climate crisis, tackle air pollution, and provide safe, clean, and affordable personal transportation. The State should encourage urgent and widespread adoption of electric vehicles. Since most current electric vehicle owners are single-family homeowners who charge at home, providing access to home charging for those in multi-unit dwellings is crucial to wider electric vehicle adoption. This includes small multi-family residences and condominium unit owners and renters, regardless of parking space ownership and regardless of income.

Therefore, a significant portion of parking spaces in new and renovated residential developments should be capable of electric vehicle charging without displacing low-income residents. Additionally, renters and condominium unit owners shall be able to install charging equipment for electric vehicles under reasonable conditions.

Recommendation: Support legislation that requires EV-capable parking spaces for multi-family units while implementing protections for low-income households, or bills with similar intent.

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Mitigates Inefficiency
- Encourages cost-effective government

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Leadership
- Environmental Stewardship

Topic: Superintendent of Public Works Licensure Mandate Removal

Issue: Current state statute surrounding the County's ability to hire a Superintendent of Public Works mandates the individual hired to hold a Professional Engineering license in the State of Illinois. No such requirement is mandated for municipalities, regardless of size of said municipality or the municipal Public Works Department.

The removal of the licensure mandate for Counties will create parity with municipalities and will provide Counties the ability to hire superintendents from a larger pool of candidates.

Recommendation: Support legislation that allows for a superintendent of a department of public works to either: (1) be a registered professional engineer, (2) hold a degree in engineering from an accredited institution of higher learning, or (3) have at least 10 years of professional, management-level experience in either a municipal or county public works department (rather than the superintendent shall be a registered professional engineer).

Guiding Tenet(s) of the Legislative Agenda

- Grants additional permissive authorities

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Leadership
- Environmental Stewardship

Topic: Waukegan Coal Plant Environmental Remediation

Issue: The Waukegan coal power plant, located along Waukegan's Lake Michigan lakefront, was decommissioned in the summer of 2022. The owner's current plan is to leave and cap a coal ash pond which currently resides on the property. The long-term existence of the pond creates risk to the surrounding area, residents, and the waters of Lake Michigan. To ensure appropriate protection of the environment, the coal ash pond on the site should be completely removed at a minimum. Additional efforts should be employed to further minimize or eliminate short and long term environmental impacts.

Recommendation: Support legislation that mandates the complete removal of the coal ash ponds of the former coal plant. Support Waukegan's legislative efforts that focus on additional environmental remediation of the former coal plant site.

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Environmental Stewardship

Topic: Federal Funding for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs)

Issue: The number of veteran suicides nationwide continues to rise, and approximately 14 of the 20 veterans who die by suicide each day are not under Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) care. This national public health crisis requires a national approach that meets veterans where they're located. County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) are often the first point of contact in the community for veteran's services and they provide assistance on a range of benefits, including service-connected benefits, enrollment in VA health care, VA home loans, education benefits, and available job placement assistance. Veterans are not always aware of the available benefits, and CVSOs are often the first to inform them about their eligibility. CVSOs are nationally accredited by the VA to prepare, present, and prosecute VA claims. However, there is currently no federal funding directly available for CVSOs.

Recommendation: Support the CVSO Act, or similar federal bills, that provide federal funding to support CVSOs or similar local entities.

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Fiscal Responsibility

Topic: Firearm Regulation

Issue: Lake County recognizes that changes are necessary in State or Federal regulation as it relates to firearm safety and control due to the prevalence of gun violence in our Nation.

Recommendation: Lake County **Supports** legislation that:

1. Bans the sale or possession of assault rifles
2. Mandates firearm safe storage
3. Reforms the FOID Card process
4. Mandates training related to the sale or possession of firearms

Value(s) of the County Board Strategic Plan

- Leadership

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Lake County, Illinois