October 30, 2017

Honorable John P. Daley
Chairman Finance Committee
118 N. Clark St., Floor 3 1/2
Chicago, IL, 60602

Dear Honorable Chairman Daley,

Please find below the responses to Commissioner Silvestri’s questions in regards to the Department of Environment and Sustainability during the Chief Financial Officer’s budget hearing.

1. No Overlap with City of Chicago

The Department of Environment and Sustainability’s regulatory authority is entirely within suburban and unincorporated Cook County. The City of Chicago performs similar functions within their jurisdiction. There is no overlap or redundancy in services performed by the City of Chicago.

2. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Pays Cook County to Perform Some Inspections, Covering Costs

The department performs inspections of solid waste facilities under an intergovernmental agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IL EPA). Each county surrounding Cook has such an agreement with the state. IL EPA delegates this authority to 16 counties and the City of Chicago, under the longstanding policy that local agencies are best equipped to handle local issues. Cook County receives the highest funding of any other delegated agency. The county receives $329,000 to perform these inspections, covering our costs including salaries, fringes, administration (portions of costs for Director, Deputy Director, Business Manager and Timekeeper). In addition, this covers the operation of vehicles phone, equipment, space costs and indirect costs.

The department also performs a de minimis amount of work on inspections for the IL EPA under our U.S. EPA Air Grants ($615,000 and $245,000 annually). This largely involves sharing information with the state about inspections (primarily asbestos inspections) we are already conducting annually under our County ordinance.

Martha Martinez
Chief Administrative Officer

cc: Ammar Rizki, Chief Financial Officer
    Tanya Anthony, Budget Director
    Deborah Stone, Director of Environment and Sustainability