



**DATE:** November 3, 2025

**MEMO TO:** Sara Knizhnik, Chair  
Operations Committee

**FROM:** Alex Ty Kovach  
Executive Director

**RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend approval of an Ordinance Prohibiting the Use of District Property for Certain Civil Immigration Enforcement Activities.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED:** Leadership; Public Access & Connections

**FINANCIAL DATA:** There is no financial impact at this time.

**BACKGROUND:** The Board has previously approved “An Ordinance Regarding Licenses and Easements” governing the District’s issuance of permission via easements and licenses for use of District property for purposes reasonably connected to District purposes and to provide for such rules, regulations, and conditions to provide for the protection and preservation of the property, facilities, flora, fauna, and scenic beauties of the District. Inasmuch as the potential use of District roads and parking lots as a staging area, a processing location or an operations base to facilitate civil immigration enforcement actions (i) would be inconsistent with the District’s Mission, (ii) would interfere and conflict with the public’s ability to use District Property for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public, as envisioned by the Downstate Forest Preserve Act, (iii) would not be reasonably connected to the purposes for which the District was created, and (iv) would not be a Public Service, as that term is used under the Act or the License and Easement Ordinance, the attached ordinance is proposed to prohibit those certain uses of District property.

**REVIEW BY OTHERS:** Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Public Safety, Manager of Board Operations and Corporate Counsel.



**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT  
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING  
THE USE OF DISTRICT PROPERTY FOR  
CERTAIN CIVIL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES**

**WHEREAS**, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) was created by public referendum on November 4, 1958, and over its first 50-plus years has grown to become the second largest forest preserve district in Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, the District owns (in fee simple or via easements) more than 31,500 acres of forest preserves and other land throughout Lake County, together with the structures and improvements within such preserves and land (collectively, “District Property”); and

**WHEREAS**, the District is a political subdivision of the State of Illinois that exists pursuant to, and is governed by, applicable State statutes and law, including the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act, 70 ILCS 805/0.001 et seq. (the "Enabling Act"); and

**WHEREAS**, the District's statutory purposes under the Enabling Act include acquiring, restoring, restocking, developing, and maintaining lands in their natural state and condition to protect and preserve their flora, fauna and scenic beauties for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public; and

**WHEREAS**, the District, consistent with the Enabling Act, has determined that its mission is “to preserve a dynamic and unique system of natural and cultural resources, and to develop innovative educational, recreational and cultural opportunities of regional value, while exercising environmental and fiscal responsibility” (the “District’s Mission”); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 6 of the Enabling Act, 70 ILCS 805/6, the District has the "power to grant licenses, easements and rights-of-way for the construction, operation and maintenance upon, under or across any property of [the] District of facilities for water, sewage, telephone, telegraph, electric, gas or other public service, subject to such terms and conditions as may be determined by [the] District” (“Public Services”); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 7b of the Enabling Act, 70 ILCS 805/7b, the District’s Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) may by ordinance issue licenses “for any activity reasonably connected” with the purpose for which the District has been created; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 7 of the Enabling Act, 70 ILCS 805/7, the Board may exclude traffic, teams, and vehicles from the paths, driveways, and roadways within District Property (collectively, “District Roads”); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 8 of the Act, 70 ILCS 805/8, the District may enact such rules and regulations for the management and conduct of its operations and business as it deems appropriate; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has previously approved “An Ordinance Regarding Licenses and Easements”, governing the District’s issuance of (i) easements for Public Services and (ii) licenses for Public Services and certain private uses of District Property for purposes reasonably connected to District purposes and to provide for such rules, regulations, and conditions to provide for the protection and preservation of the property, facilities, flora, fauna, and scenic beauties of the District, and for the general safety of the public (the “License and Easement Ordinance”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Board hereby finds that the use of District Property, including without limitation District Roads and parking lots, as a staging area, a processing location, or an operations base to facilitate civil immigration enforcement actions (i) would be inconsistent with the District’s Mission, (ii) would interfere and conflict with the public’s ability to use District Property for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public, as envisioned by the Enabling Act, (iii) would not be reasonably connected to the purposes for which the District was created, and (iv) would not be a Public Service, as that term is used under the Act or the License and Easement Ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the authorities provided in the Enabling Act, the License and Easement Ordinance, and any other applicable authority, the Board finds that it is in the best interests of the District to adopt this Ordinance;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois, THAT:

**Section 1: Recitals.** The recitals set forth above are incorporated as part of this Ordinance by this reference.

**Section 2: Prohibition on Certain Uses of District Property.** Based on the findings above, the District hereby declares that District Property shall not be used (i) as a staging area to assemble, mobilize, or deploy vehicles, equipment, materials, or personnel for the purpose of carrying out civil immigration enforcement operations, (ii) as a processing location for civil immigration enforcement purposes, (iii) as an operations base for civil immigration enforcement purposes or (iv) as the location of any barrier or other structure related to any of the foregoing purposes.

**Section 3: Scope of Ordinance.** This Ordinance is not intended to, and shall not be construed to (i) restrict or interfere with the execution of lawful judicial warrants or the enforcement of criminal laws, (ii) modify or interfere with rights under any easement, license, or other agreement to which the District is a party; (iii) limit the rights of any person or entity under state or federal law, or (iv) prohibit the lawful use of District Property for purposes other than a staging area, processing location, or operations base for civil immigration enforcement.

**Section 4: Further Actions.** The District’s Executive Director, and their designees, are hereby authorized to take such actions as they deem necessary or appropriate to enforce, and to effectuate the intent and scope of, this Ordinance, which may include, without limitation (i) denying requests for

easements, licenses, agreements, or permits to use District Property in a manner inconsistent with this Ordinance and (ii) appropriately securing and controlling access to District Property.

**Section 5: Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

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Jessica Vealitzek, President  
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Gragnani, Secretary  
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. \_\_\_\_\_