



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2017

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CITY COUNCIL APPROVES MAYOR EMANUEL'S ORDINANCE
TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL WASTE DUMPING**

City Council today approved an ordinance introduced by Mayor Rahm Emanuel that holds accountable those who illegally leave waste on public or private property, a practice known as fly dumping. The measure is part of broader efforts to protect the public health of residents and significantly increases fines on those who illegally discard materials in an attempt to avoid proper disposal.

"Children and families of Chicago deserve to have safe, clean and pollution-free spaces to live, work and play," said Mayor Emanuel. "With the passage of this ordinance, we are making continued progress on those efforts while reducing the burden on Chicago's taxpayers to clean up the mess."

Fly-dumping subjects residents to health and environment risks and costs taxpayers money. Last year, the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) completed almost 4,000 fly-dumping clean-ups, which generated over 32,000 tons for disposal. At \$48 per ton, less fly-dumping leads to significant disposal savings. These clean-up efforts for fly-dumping last year cost the City over \$1.5 million.

"The fly-dumping initiative will help to ensure our land, air and water are free of pollutants so children and families of Chicago have safe and clean spaces to work, live and play," said Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Julie Morita, M.D. "This measure will give CDPH environmental inspectors more tools to hold illegal fly dumpers accountable. Our goal is to ensure a clean and healthy environment for all Chicago residents."

Fly dumping waste ranges from construction debris to barrels of hazardous materials. It can endanger the environmental and public health of residents by attracting rats, creating a potential breeding ground for mosquitoes that may carry the West Nile Virus and polluting the land, air and water. CDPH has had several large cleanups in the last two years, including one where 121,000 cubic yards of crushed concrete were left on a vacant site. CDPH required the responsible party to pay a hefty fine and properly clean up the site.

"I am confident that the City's latest fly-dumping initiatives, especially the proposed increase in fines, will help deter and eventually eradicate the illegal practice, making our communities safer and cleaner for our residents to live, work and play in," said DSS Commissioner Charles L. Williams.

The measure will give CDPH environmental inspectors more tools to hold illegal fly dumpers accountable. The goal is to reduce the burden on the City resulting in lower cleanup costs and reduced time spent going after violators. This ordinance proposes that fines in the municipal code increase from a maximum of \$3,500 for repeat violators to \$30,000 for large quantities plus additional penalties added for hazardous liquid waste. Additionally, in an effort to identify those who may be dumping waste illegally, security cameras will be installed in areas across the city where fly dumping is common.

At the end of September, DSS joined CDPH to announce two cases pending against fly dumping suspects thanks to 15 recently installed security cameras that caught the offenders in the act. These cases highlight the importance of this ordinance, introduced by Mayor Emanuel in early September, to crack down on fly dumping and significantly increase fines to hold illegal fly-dumpers accountable.

The fly dumping ordinance is the latest in a series of steps Mayor Emanuel has taken to protect the environment, ranging from shutting down petcoke operations on the southeast side to committing Chicago to meeting the requirements of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

###