

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

ILLINOIS STATE REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE MEYERS-MARTIN CO-SPONSORS HB43 THAT WOULD BRING STABILITY, BUSINESSES AND JOBS TO THE SOUTHLAND

BILL AIMS TO ATTRACT MARKET DRIVEN INVESTMENT TO SOUTHERN COOK COUNTY

(Springfield, Ill) Debbie Meyers-Martin- Illinois State Representative of the 38th Legislative District- is co-sponsoring proposed legislation known as the Southland Reactivation Act. The measure is being introduced to spur reuse of vacant, tax-exempt commercial and industrial properties.

Representative Meyers-Martin along with other southland elected leaders are presenting this legislation as an immediate solution to help address high property tax burdens and the staggering number of blighted or underperforming commercial and industrial properties throughout the Southland.

“Southern Cook County has not only been significantly challenged in staying pace, but lags behind most regions of Illinois due to the decline in many southland historical industry areas. There is a significant hardship at times to attract and succeed at business retention due to high property tax rates, and pervasive poverty and high unemployment within many of our towns,” said the bill’s co-sponsor Representative Meyers-Martin

Meyers-Martin continues. “HB43 will allow our various towns the opportunity to attract market-driven investment to southern Cook County. This will restore, retain and increase our tax base and lure jobs to the region.”

The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) describes the proposed legislation as the right move to lead the region back to its industrial prominence. Recently the SSMMA held a legislative breakfast and detailed the current plight as well as the benefits of HB43. The region has been unable to compete for new investment due to the high tax rates. The goal of the Act is to successfully revitalize blighted properties to get them back on the tax rolls, which in turn will add to the community’s tax base and bring jobs to the area.

According to the South Suburban Land Bank and Development Authority's records, the Lincoln Center's assessed value was adjusted in 2007 through 2011 from \$440,892 to \$340,291 due to a "total vacancy" of the property. Two businesses—Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness and a physician—had previously occupied the premises, however in July of 2012, the records listed the Cook County Sheriff Department as the owners.

SSMMA is firm in their belief that when commercial properties remain vacant and business dries up, the tax burden shifts to homeowners. At a recent meeting in late January with Southland elected officials, Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi estimated that about 71 percent of the tax base in the South Triad is paid by homeowners, compared to approximately 56 percent in the North Triad, which has a diverse taxpayer base (homeowners, office rentals, manufacturers, retailers, etc.). Additionally, according to Assessor Kaegi, Southland tax rates are the highest in the country.

"We have unique challenges in the Southland, and are trying to assemble the tools needed to address them," said SSMMA President and Robbins Mayor Tyrone Ward. "The Southland Reactivation Act will allow us to jump-start the process."

House Bill 43 is sponsored by State Rep. Anthony DeLuca, and co-sponsored by Reps. Debbie Meyers-Martin William Davis, Robert Rita, Frances Ann Hurley, Marcus C. Evans, Jr., Thaddeus Jones, Nicholas K. Smith, Margo McDermed, Kelly M. Burke, Justin Slaughter and Emanuel Chris Welch.