

Angela Tovar
Commissioner, City of Chicago
Department of Environment
Via Electronic Mail

March 26, 2024

Dear Commissioner Tovar,

REUSO supports the Coalition application from the City of Chicago and County of Cook for \$5M for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. My organization REUSO empowers food and beverage operators of all sizes to adopt reusable, returnable containers through our tag and trace technology platform. REUSO sources containers from local manufacturers to create durable products that can be used over a thousand times, representing an exponential reduction in waste and GHG emissions. We are proud winners of Chicago Innovation's 2022 Climate Champion Award, and we will use REUSO's Chicagoland model as a standard to be adopted across major cities in the United States.

REUSO creates a 'digital twin' of each reusable item starting with serialized QR tag on the physical item and a digital representation of this reusable in our software system. This empowers operators to maximize return rates and allows for accurate impact metrics that are accessed through our dashboard. Data collected from our platform provides real-time reporting that can be used to improve and report on systems at the brick- mortar level and large food-serving venues such as campuses and stadiums. This research will eventually extend to municipalities and help local governments track their progress in eliminating single-use items.

Through this grant opportunity, REUSO will continue to build out infrastructure supporting reuse in Chicago and invest a significant portion in building REUSO's first container-washing hub and reverse logistics system. Through this local hub, REUSO, the City of Chicago, and County of Cook can create hundreds of new jobs focused on the local, circular economy. Such job creation would include warehouse management, dishwashing, drivers, and more. This hub will also serve as a workforce reentry pad for participating businesses. In addition, this grant would provide local businesses with REUSO jumpstart kits, including the software, return bins, and reusable containers necessary to begin their transition from single use to reuse.

This hub will also empower REUSO to wash for large-scale stadiums throughout Chicagoland, such as Wrigley Field (Chicago Cubs), Soldier Field (Bears), and United Center (Bulls/Blackhawks) as well as large scale festivals, corporate campuses, and entertainment/event venues. By implementing REUSO at just one professional sports event, we can eliminate tens of thousands of single use waste items from the landfill and showcase the environmental impact of this reduction in CO2 emissions removed, GHG saved, water and electricity saved, and more.

REUSO is serious about reducing the 22 million pounds of plastics that end up in the Great Lakes each year and we are excited to play our part by eliminating single use food waste. By implementing REUSO and keeping the containers in circulation, we look forward to partnering with the EPA, Cook County, and the City of Chicago to eliminate millions of single use items from the landfill and waterways.

The Chicago/Cook County CRPG Coalition Proposal advances highly effective Greenhouse Gas reduction strategies that also have strong Environmental Justice benefits. Measures include an Industrial Decarbonization component (for Chicago, Suburban Cook County, and DuPage County) to assist smaller and medium sized businesses, to install energy efficient and electrified equipment, renewable energy, and refrigerant replacement systems, while reducing toxics and air pollution in Environmental Justice areas.

The program will also address food waste in Chicago and Cook County through creation of food scrap collection programs and the infrastructure to support them. And it will pursue aggressive energy efficiency, electrification and renewable energy strategies in public buildings such as schools, libraries and public housing in low income and distressed communities to reduce air pollution, provide jobs, and create educational working models for aggressively addressing climate change.

The proposal shared by the project team to drastically reduce our GHG emissions and catalyze economic opportunities within the clean energy economy is critical for the Chicago region and we look forward to working closely to support this effort. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further assistance or information.

Sincerely,
Eva Bugg and Neil Misak Co-Founders, REUSO Technologies Inc.