



March 25, 2024

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

**RE: City of Chicago and County of Cook CRPG Coalition Proposal**

Dear Commissioner Tovar,

On behalf of the North American Sustainable Refrigeration Council (NASRC), we are pleased to express our support for the Coalition application from the City of Chicago and County of Cook for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant.

NASRC is a 501(c)(3) environmental nonprofit working to advance climate-friendly natural refrigerants and reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by traditional hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerants. We collaborate with stakeholders from across the industry, including over 55,000 food retail locations, to eliminate the barriers to natural refrigerants in U.S. grocery stores.

Once considered a suitable replacement for ozone-depleting substances, HFCs are one of the most potent drivers of climate change. Pound for pound, HFCs trap thousands of times more heat in the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub>. Classified as short-lived climate pollutants, HFCs have a disproportionate impact on warming in the near term, making their mitigation significantly more urgent than other greenhouse gases.

Natural refrigerants, including CO<sub>2</sub> (R-744), Ammonia (R-717), and Hydrocarbons (R-290, R-600a) are the most climate-friendly solution. Unlike most other refrigerant alternatives, they are not at risk of being categorized as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), making them the most future-proof solution for the refrigeration industry.

However natural refrigerants are not a “drop-in” solution for existing facilities, so the transition from HFCs requires a costly full replacement of the refrigeration system. This cost burden is particularly challenging for small and independent businesses and those operating in disadvantaged communities, as these businesses often lack the financial resources to transition their facilities. Funding support is crucial for small and independent businesses disproportionately impacted by the cost to transition away from HFC refrigerants.

The Chicago/Cook County CRPG Coalition Proposal will advance highly effective greenhouse gas reduction strategies that also have strong environmental justice benefits. This proposal includes an industrial decarbonization component 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. It also includes aggressive energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy strategies in public buildings located in low income and distressed communities.

NASRC is the third-party administrator for a program in California that is similar to refrigeration replacement portion of this proposal. There, the Fluorinated Gas Reduction Incentive Program (FRIP) will provide funding to support the replacement of HFC-based equipment with climate-friendly refrigeration equipment. We would

be pleased to support the planning and implementation of the proposed grant program in Chicago and Cook County, bringing lessons learned, industry connections, and guidance to maximize the success of this critically important program.

The proposal shared by the project team to drastically reduce greenhouse gas 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 us for further assistance or information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danielle Wright', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Danielle Wright  
Executive Director  
NASRC