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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February, 28, 2019

GARY OPPOSED TO INDIANA SENATE BILL 581 THAT CONTRADICTS CITY'S MARQUETTE PLAN

Gary, Indiana-The Indiana Senate Committee recently passed two bills in the Legislative Session that greatly impact the City of Gary and the city's beaches in Marquette Park. While one bill helps define and codify the favorable opinions of the Indiana Supreme Court and United States Supreme Court pertaining to public access to the beach, another bill seeks to weaken those decisions.

In 2018, the Indiana Supreme Court in *Gunderson v. State* unanimously held that the shore of Lake Michigan has been public land since Indiana's statehood and that Indiana holds that shore land "in trust" for the people of the state. On February 19 of this year, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the *Gunderson* petition, effectively ending the challenge to the Indiana Supreme Court's decision and solidifying it as Indiana law.

Senator Blake Doriot (R-Syracuse) has proposed Senate Bill 581, which seemingly undermines the Indiana Supreme Court's decision. Senate Bill 581 creates a new lakefront zone across the Lake Michigan shoreline, including City of Gary park property. The bill strips the City of its ability to regulate and manage one of its greatest assets; its beautiful beaches, by superseding the city's current local ordinances and rules. The bill would also allow for development of areas that could potentially destroy dune habitat. Moreover, Senate Bill 581 is a contradiction to the city's Marquette Plan and public accessibility efforts.

Senate bill 553 introduced by Senator Karen Tallian (D-Ogden Dunes) which seeks to define and codify recreational uses for public beach access was also recently passed in the Senate. The City of Gary supports Senator Tallian's bill as it will clarify and protect the meaning of public access and use of our beaches.

City officials say significant investments have been made in Marquette Park and in the areas of Miller Beach which would become part of the “Lake Michigan Shore Zone” under Senate Bill 581. The city has passed ordinances and rules at the local level to protect and preserve its natural resources while providing public access and promoting public safety. City officials also noted that countless resources have been expended to protect, restore, and plan for the future of Marquette Park’s natural resources while providing public access to hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors to Miller Beach and Lake Michigan during our festivals and Air Shows. Senate bill 581 would also undermine the countless resources poured into and the potential developed under our Marquette Regional Plan together with NIRPC.

As such, the City of Gary is vehemently opposed to SB 581 and we ask residents and others to contact your state legislators as well as those on the Indiana House Natural Resources Committee to also express your opposition. A list of members of the House Natural Resources Committee is listed here.

House Natural Resources				
Member	Caucus	Statehouse Phone	Statehouse Email	Website
Rep. Sean Eberhart- Chair	R	3172329619	h57@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h57
Rep. Jeff Ellington- Vice Chair	R	3172329850	h62@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h62
Rep. David Abbott	R	3172329816	h82@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h82
Rep. Mike Aylesworth	R	3172329671	h11@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h11
Rep. Michael Karickhoff	R	3172329802	h30@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h30
Rep. Shane Lindauer	R	3172349447	h63@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h63
Rep. Alan Morrison	R	3172329648	h42@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h42
Rep. J.D. Prescott	R	3172349028	h33@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h33
Rep. David Alan Wolkins	R	3172349028	h18@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h18
Rep. Ryan Dvorak	D	3172329794	h8@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h8
Rep. Sue Errington	D	3172329834	h34@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h34
Rep. Rita Fleming	D	3172329987	h71@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h71

Rep. Tonya Pfaff- RMM	D	3172329798	h43@iga.in.gov	www.in.gov/h43
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