

State of Illinois
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
207 State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706

August 26, 2003

To the Honorable Members of the
Illinois Senate
93rd General Assembly

Park districts and forest preserves are central to the life of many communities for recreation, renewal, and quality of life. Managing and maintaining these public areas are central to serving the community. SB 83 proposed one avenue for ensuring that funds are available, but it relies on increasing property taxes outside the limits set through tax caps and without the voter approval process required by them. Our analysis indicates that property taxes on a home valued at \$100,000 would increase by \$7 per year to \$52 per year, depending on the park district. In total, the Cook County Forest Preserve District provisions could cost \$8.0 million per year in property taxes. I do not support property tax increases outside the limits of the tax cap law.

I do, however, support the intent of this legislation and will therefore create a grant program, within the state's bonded capital program, that will allow eligible park districts and forest preserve districts to apply for funds to support capital improvements. The grant program will provide a match to amounts local park districts make available under the terms of the grant and will make grant funds available to eligible forest preserve districts. Grant recipients will have to document the need for the projects and the state funds, demonstrating that no other funds within their existing tax authority will support the proposed projects.

I commend the park districts and forest preserves for their support of our communities. These new grant programs demonstrate my support for the vital role they play.

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby veto and return Senate Bill 83, entitled "AN ACT concerning taxes."

Sincerely,
ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
Governor