



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD raises the Pride flag at its seven water reclamation plants for first time



In recognition of Pride Month, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) raised the Pride flag at its downtown headquarters for the first time in 2019. Two years and one pandemic later, Commissioners and staff have raised the flag at each of the MWRD's seven water reclamation plants.

The rainbow striped flag is associated with the movement for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

(LGBT) rights and is a widely-recognized emblem of equality and inclusion.

“Over the years, the Pride flag has symbolized a courageous commitment to freedom and equality, both for the LGBT community and for others,” said MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore. “This year, it seemed important to raise the Pride flag not just at District headquarters in downtown Chicago, but also at the workplaces throughout Cook *(continued)*

## MWRD raises the Pride flag at its seven water reclamation plants, *cont.*

County where hundreds of employees help to fulfill our vital mission to protect public health and water quality each day. Raising the Pride flag says, and shows, that the District is committed to treating everyone at MWRD and in Cook County with respect.”

In 2007, Commissioner Shore and her fellow commissioners enacted fair treatment policies for employees and their domestic partners, ensuring equal access to health care benefits for same-sex couples. In 2017, they also championed measures to ensure that same-sex spouses of District employees who had retired before marriage equality became law in Illinois were assured the same retirement benefits as opposite-sex spouses. In June 2020, the Board approved a new policy to promote opportunities for small business enterprises owned and operated by members of the LGBT community.

“Steps that we have taken at MWRD to ensure LGBT inclusion reflect our commitment to addressing issues of inequity,” said MWRD Commissioner

Marcelino Garcia. “We are opening opportunities for LGBT-owned businesses and through strong partnerships such as the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, we strive to engage and learn from our partners and communities. The future success of our agency depends on these inclusive changes.”

“The LGBTQIA+ community in Chicago and Cook County has made wide-ranging contributions in numerous fields, including business, manufacturing, real estate, education, the arts, media, not-for-profit organizations, politics, and government,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “The District and commissioners have been advocates in assuring equal access to clean water services and opportunities for employees and District contracts.”

Visit our YouTube page or click on the link to watch a video of the June 1, 2021 Pride flag raising ceremony held at the Main Office Building and pictures from our water reclamation plants.

<https://youtu.be/CvnoaijR19Q>

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### *Recovering Resources, Transforming Water*

*Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).*