



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Legislative Day promotes advocacy for MWRD stewardship

*MWRD commissioners meet with Illinois General Assembly and advance legislation that expands MWRD's work in stormwater management, sustainable energy sources and efficiency*



*From L to R: MWRD Commissioner Patricia Theresa Flynn, Commissioner Yumeka Brown, former Vice President Kimberly Du Buclet, President Kari K. Steele, Commissioner Eira L. Corral Sepúlveda, Executive Director Brian A. Perkovich and Commissioner Daniel Pogorzelski visit the Capitol in Springfield to seek support for MWRD initiatives and work.*

Leaders of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) completed a successful legislative day in Springfield to bolster critical state advocacy to protect the region's water environment.

For the first time since the pandemic, the MWRD Board of Commissioners traveled to the Illinois State Capitol to meet with members of the Illinois General Assembly to inform them of ongoing MWRD work and projects, and garner support for MWRD legislative initiatives to manage stormwater, develop wind and solar energy resources and improve efficiency for its industrial waste program.

"We are in the communities of state lawmakers transforming wastewater into clean water, improving the quality of our area wa-

ter resources and protecting their towns and neighborhoods from flooding, and now in Springfield because without their support establishing the laws, ordinances and policies, we cannot complete our important mission," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "We thank our partners in Springfield for making this a successful legislative day."

The Illinois General Assembly created the MWRD in 1889 through an enabling Act that first authorized the then Sanitary District of Chicago to reverse the flow of the Chicago River. About 134 years after that first assignment to reverse the flow of the river, the MWRD today strives to continue a strong relationship with lawmakers in Springfield. In 2004, state lawmakers authorized the MWRD to become the regional stormwater authority for Cook County. Since then, the MWRD has repeatedly (*continued*)

# Legislative Day promotes advocacy for MWRD stewardship, *cont.*

returned to Springfield to shape and improve this authority to ensure more local communities benefit from effective stormwater management programs and solutions to flooding and water pollution.

“We are grateful for the support and collaboration of our partners in Springfield,” said MWRD Commissioner Daniel Pogorzelski. “It is imperative that we highlight our essential work and the value that it brings to taxpayers so that we may continue to improve and protect our water environment in Cook County and downstream.”

At their visit to the Capitol, MWRD commissioners met with House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch (7th Dist.), Republican Senate Leader John Curran (41st Dist.), House Republican Leader Tony McCombie (89th Dist.) and met briefly with Senate President Don Harmon (39th Dist.), Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, and dozens of other lawmakers.

This year, the MWRD was following three pieces of legislation. These included Senate Bill 1673, which allows the MWRD to enhance enforcement under the Watershed Management Ordinance which aims to protect public health, safety, and welfare, and Cook County homes and businesses from flood damage by managing and mitigating the effects of development and redevelopment on

stormwater drainage. House Bill 2219 would allow the MWRD to construct and develop wind and solar facilities on its properties, and House Bill 3133 would improve efficiency and modernization for the MWRD’s industrial users by allowing users to file information electronically.

Each day, the MWRD collects and transforms the region’s wastewater, urban runoff and stormwater into clean water and releases it back into the environment to serve and protect 5.19 million residents living in Chicago and 128 surrounding suburbs. Driven by strong fiscal reserves and a five-year Strategic Plan, the MWRD maintains an AAA credit rating from Fitch Ratings and an AA+ rating from S&P Global and was recently honored by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for the 47th consecutive year with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, placing the essential utility in the top two percent of governments receiving a consecutive award. In addition to its role of protecting area waterways, the source of drinking water in Lake Michigan and communities from flooding, the MWRD recently adopted a new Climate Action Plan outlining long-term planning to reduce its carbon footprint and protect the region from the effects of climate change.



## *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).