



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

**Allison Fore**

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

[allison.fore@mwrdd.org](mailto:allison.fore@mwrdd.org)

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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## MWRD seeks public comments on draft climate action plan

Ensuring continued delivery of high-quality wastewater treatment and stormwater management services, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) has drafted an ambitious climate action plan to serve as guidance in the MWRD's ongoing mission of protecting the region's water environment over the next century.

The MWRD plans to unveil its draft plan during a study session to the MWRD Board of Commissioners and seeks public comments through August 8, 2022, as it works to build consensus with taxpayers, partners and other stakeholders on a path to resiliency. The MWRD Climate Action Plan (CAP) will serve as a living document to be revisited every two years as the MWRD deals with the unpredictable nature of climate change that threatens to raise temperatures, create adverse weather events and bring about flooding and drought. To learn more and read the CAP, visit <https://mwrdd.org/public-notice>.

"Our water utility and the water resources we aim to protect are at risk when it comes to the impacts of climate change," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "It is critical that we outline a plan to keep us prepared as we move into the coming decades. The MWRD Climate Action Plan is that roadmap and offers us one more tool to help protect our water environment and stave off the uncontrollable forces of climate change. We hope this plan engages and impacts all communities we serve, as we work to protect the public health and our planet."



*The MWRD's role in protecting the water quality in the region faces new threats of climate change. The MWRD has released a draft Climate Action Plan, outlining its part in confronting these uncertainties.*

The CAP will guide future infrastructure planning and outline how the MWRD will address climate action through a variety of adaptive and mitigative strategies to maintain its reliable and essential services. The document demonstrates a series of initiatives that the MWRD began taking to lower its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, find renewable energy sources and sequester carbon.

Despite the federal government's intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement in June 2017, the MWRD Board of Commissioners passed a resolution a month later in 2017 to honor the Paris Agreement by continuing to reduce GHG emissions. In late 2018, the MWRD installed new infrastructure at its Stickney Water Reclamation Plant that will allow the MWRD to begin the gradual process of *(continued)*

## MWRD seeks public comments on draft climate action plan, *cont.*

decommissioning tanks to curb methane emissions and reduce its carbon footprint by up to 172,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. It is one of many optimization processes and technology upgrades that the MWRD is making along with investments in renewable energy sources to reduce carbon emissions by 28 percent from 2005 baseline levels by the year 2025, and an 80-percent reduction by 2050. Recent legislation like the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) and Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) put the MWRD on track to further lower its carbon footprint.

These reductions will be paramount to the health of the region and MWRD's success in combating climate change over the next 30 years. Changes in the climate observed globally in past decades are the result of man-made emissions of GHGs, which have contributed to heating the earth's atmosphere, according to the MWRD CAP. Global average temperatures are projected to increase by 1 to 1.5°F over the next few decades and continue soaring by the end of this century.

At the same time, annual precipitation is projected to increase by up to 19 percent by the end of the century and annual runoff is predicted to increase by as much as 20 percent over that time. Given the intensity and frequency of rainstorms, the energy demand at WRPs may increase over time, despite the MWRD's best efforts. To that end, the CAP also highlights the myriad stormwater management projects the MWRD is undertaking to meet rising flooding concerns.

"Thanks to investments in optimizing new technology at our water reclamation plants, stormwater management partnerships, and the grand Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, we have taken the necessary and strategic steps to cut down on our carbon footprint and manage more rainfall during intense rainfall events we experience," said MWRD Commissioner Kimberly Du Buclet. "I look forward to hearing from Cook County residents, community stakeholders and partners on our proposed climate action plan and how we can incorporate their feedback and insights into our work."

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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).*