



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD welcomes U.S. Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García, State Rep. Celina Villanueva for tour of Stickney Water Reclamation Plant

U.S. Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García (IL-4th) and State Rep. Celina Villanueva (21st Dist.) recently toured the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago’s (MWRD’s) Stickney Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) to see how their constituents’ water is protected in the face of changing weather patterns.

The enormity of operations at one of the world’s largest wastewater treatment plants was explained during a tour led by MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and MWRD engineers and staff. The Stickney WRP serves residents in the central part of Chicago as well as 46 other communities within a 260-square-mile-area.

“We thank Rep. Garcia and Rep. Villanueva for their interest in our work protecting our water environment and their continued support,” said Commissioner Avila. “Not only do they represent the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant and our neighbors in their respective districts, but they also champion our water resources and work to protect our planet.”

The delegation toured plant operations and visited the Stickney WRP’s nutrient recovery facility, where the MWRD is removing nutrients from the wastewater stream and recovering it as a slow-release fertilizer to be reused, marketed and distributed. The fertilizer, known as Crystal Green, provides a revenue stream for the MWRD as well as a victory for the environment by the reduction of nutrients in the water downstream that is prone to algal blooms that threaten water quality. The Stickney WRP also recovers water to be used for industrial purposes, biosolids that are used for composting and soil amendments, and energy that is reused to heat



*MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, State Rep. Celina Villanueva and U.S. Jesús G. “Chuy” García look on as MWRD Managing Engineer Joe Cummings and Senior Engineer Debra Hill lead them on a tour of the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant’s nutrient recovery facility, where the MWRD recovers phosphorus and nitrogen from wastewater streams and converts it into a slow-release fertilizer.*

buildings and power WRP processes and reduce the energy demand at the WRP.

The tour was led by Managing Engineer Joe Cummings and Senior Engineer Debra Hill, accompanied by Maintenance and Operations Director John Murray and Assistant Director of Maintenance and Operations Tom Conway.

“Thanks to Joe Cummings and the MWRD staff for giving me a tour of the Stickney plant, which treats and cleans 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater per day to protect the health and safety of our water and the Great Lakes,” said Rep. Garcia. “While Chicago is a leader in wastewater management, Congress must pass a transformational infrastructure bill to boost water safety across the country. We must maintain and upgrade *(continued)*

## MWRD welcomes U.S. Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García for tour, *cont.*



*MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila and MWRD staff welcomed U.S. Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García and State Rep. Celina Villanueva to Stickney Water Reclamation Plant to tour one of the world’s largest wastewater treatment plants, capable of treating up to 1 million gallons of water per minute.*

our facilities to keep our communities and the environment healthy for future generations.”

State Rep. Villanueva said she was impressed with the plant and its capacity to treat water for so many area residents.

“We learned about the plant’s long history and how it serves the greater Chicagoland area,” said Rep. Villanueva. “It was incredible to see how the plant protects the water environment for 2.3 million people! Thank you to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for taking the time to show us around and Commissioner Josina Morita’s Office for coordinating the tour.”



*Managing Engineer Joe Cummings leads a tour of the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant pump and blower building.*

The congressman and state representative learned how operations at Stickney are meeting the demand presented by increasing rainfall and the additional flow of water from the MWRD’s new McCook Reservoir Stage I. The Stickney WRP currently serves over 2.3 million people and cleans an average of 700 million gallons of wastewater per day and has the capacity to treat 1.4 billion gallons per day.

“We are grateful to the leadership of Rep. Garcia and Rep. Villanueva and appreciate their responsiveness to the communities they serve and the environment they work with us to protect,” said MWRD Commissioner Morita. “We thank them for visiting Stickney Water Reclamation Plant and learning about the work that goes into transforming water and recovering resources.

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### ***Recovering Resources, Transforming Water***

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwr.org](http://www.mwr.org)) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*