



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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State Revolving Fund surplus makes additional funds available to communities through Clean Water Initiative

Communities throughout Cook County are working hard to ensure their drinking water and wastewater treatment operations meet or exceed local, state and federal requirements, and to help in this effort, an existing state program that offers low-interest loans to local governments is being expanded.

On the 40th Anniversary of the national Clean Water Act, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, along with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Commissioners Frank Avila, Patricia Horton, Debra Shore, Mariyana Spyropoulos and other officials launched the \$1 billion Illinois Clean Water Initiative to overhaul Illinois' aging water infrastructure.

"On this anniversary of the landmark Clean Water Act, we renew our commitment to this precious, irreplaceable resource," said Governor Quinn. "Illinois is defined geographically and historically by waterways. Our Clean Water Initiative will preserve this legacy for future generations, improve our drinking water and put thousands of Illinoisans back to work."

Governor Quinn has directed the IEPA and Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) to expand the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program, which makes low-interest loans to communities, to offer \$1 billion in long-term, below market interest rate loans to local governments for water infrastructure

projects. Since the SRF's inception in 1989, IEPA has lent \$4.3 billion to 472 local Illinois communities. There has never been a defaulted loan during the program's history.

Over \$900 million in proposed projects are awaiting review, but the application process is still open until Dec. 31, 2012. All new and renewal pre-applications received in 2012 will be included on the Project Priority List for FY 2013, which runs through September 30, 2013.

"As a government agency, the MWRD can fully appreciate the need for local communities to be provided with additional sources of revenue that can help fund needed projects," said Commissioner Spyropoulos, chairman of the Municipalities Committee. "More than 350 local governments have already expressed interest in the program, so I would encourage those that haven't yet applied to contact the EPA to start the process."

The Clean Water Initiative will enable the state to meet the high demand for safe drinking water and wastewater treatment infrastructure funding by local governments. Commissioner Spyropoulos said that this plan will go a long way in fulfilling investment needs.

"I cannot think of a better way to celebrate the anniversary of the Clean Water Act than for our leadership in Washington and the leadership in the state to announce their continued commitment to clean water in such



MWRD Commissioner Spyropoulos

a tangible way," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "The funding support needed for infrastructure is well publicized. We deal with 125 communities in Cook County representing five million residents that need affordable alternatives to infrastructure investment. The benefits to all communities big and small throughout Illinois are immeasurable."

While the submission of a pre-application, a planning report, or other applicable loan application elements does not assure the eventual commitment of loan funds under the SRF, the first step to accessing these funds is by contacting the IEPA.

*Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. **Our water environment, Take it personally!***