



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District *of* Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD available to help commercial, industrial partners reduce phosphorus levels in wastewater

Phosphorus is a non-renewable resource needed for life to exist. However, too much in the environment can impair water quality and harm aquatic life. To meet new phosphorus limits, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is assisting industrial users in reducing phosphorus from their waste streams while implementing plans to recover this sustainable resource at the same time.

One way the MWRD protects the environment is by monitoring industrial discharges. As part of the strategy to reduce phosphorus levels, the MWRD asked commercial and industrial users throughout Cook County to evaluate their existing processes and identify potential opportunities to voluntarily reduce the phosphorus load in their discharges.

To date, two of the largest industrial users to voluntarily modify their processes to minimize the release of excess phosphorus are located in the Calumet WRP service area. Agri-Fine Corp. (www.agri-fine.com), a manufacturer of animal feed, and Gelita USA, Inc., (www.gelita.com), a gelatin manufacturer, have begun to pursue modifications in their internal processes. Although this effort is still in the early stages, these companies are to be commended for being proactive in addressing this critical water quality issue.

In addition to providing technical assistance with managing internal processes, MWRD staff can help organizations identify how they may be able to divert their high-strength waste phosphorus to a new recovery system that will be constructed at the Stickney WRP next year. The new facility will be the largest phosphorus recovery facility in the world, generating a magnesium ammonium phosphate slow release fertilizer product. The process will transform phosphorus and nitrogen recovered from municipal and industrial wastewater into a high-value, eco-friendly fertilizer.

“We believe that this public-private partnership will ultimately result in lower phosphorus concentrations in the wastewater and in our aquatic environment,” said Commissioner Cynthia Santos, chairman of the Labor and Industrial Relations committee. “We also believe that industries can expect to lower their operating costs.”

Additional information about the MWRD’s Phosphorus Reduction and Resource Recovery initiative can be obtained by calling Mathew Joseph at (312) 751-3040 or email mathew.joseph@mwrdd.org.

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Our Water Environment: Take it personally

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.