



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Governor Rauner, General Assembly improve public access to locally produced sustainable soil enhancer

Now that Governor Bruce Rauner has signed legislation recognizing “Exceptional Quality Biosolids” and their importance as a beneficial recycled material, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is one step closer to making this sustainable alternative to chemical fertilizers available to the public.

Public Act 99-0067 amends the Illinois Environmental Protection Act (IEPA) to create the new definition of “E.Q. biosolids.” The MWRD worked with the IEPA, Illinois Department of Agriculture, and several environmental groups to develop the legislation.

“The Board of Commissioners applauds the Illinois General Assembly for passing this bill and commends the Governor for signing this legislation,” said MWRD Board President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “We are particularly grateful to the bill’s sponsor, Assistant Majority Leader Elaine Nekritz. We are also thankful that the IEPA was willing to amend the Illinois Environmental Protection Act.”

MWRD biosolids are a high quality product of the wastewater treatment process. Air-dried biosolids look like dark, fine-textured topsoil and are a sustainable alternative to chemical fertilizers. Instead of being trucked to a landfill, they can be used almost anywhere soil amendments and chemical fertilizers would be used. Golf courses, athletic fields, parks and recreational facilities, and agricultural fields have used MWRD biosolids. They have also been used to restore brownfields and other disturbed lands.

“Recognition of Exceptional Quality biosolids in the state of Illinois is consistent with federal rules and is an important step towards achieving a resource recovery model,” said President Spyropoulos. “Changing the law makes good environmental sense and good economic sense.”



*Dan Collins, MWRD Supervising Civil Engineer and biosolids program manager, shows biosolids to a Telemundo cameraman on August 4. Biosolids are a sustainable alternative to fertilizer that are developed through the wastewater treatment process.*

The law helps cement the MWRD’s biosolids program which has received much acclaim from the farmers, golf course managers, landscapers, municipalities, park districts, and home owners that have used them.

Jerry Gillis, Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds for the Midlothian Park District, has found success using biosolids. “Biosolids helped us develop a high quality turf that eliminated invasive weeds and created thick green strong grass on all our playing fields. Also, our maintenance field care costs and amount of staff hours to repair heavily worn out areas have reduced drastically.”

Gina Hassett, Hinsdale Director of Parks & Recreation, agreed with Gillis. “With biosolids, our fields thrive and look like plush carpets.”

The MWRD is working on a plan to make biosolids available for public use and plans to have a distribution method in place by next spring.

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