



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer
312.751.6633
public.affairs@mwr.org
100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release
October 28, 2015

Commissioner Debra Shore discusses water reuse, phosphorus recovery at JNF Water Summit Panel

Chicago is fortunate to be located along the banks of Lake Michigan – the Great Lakes hold nearly 20 percent of the world’s fresh surface water -- but other parts of the country and the world are not so fortunate in their access to freshwater. From the states relying on depleted aquifers to water-starved nations, a global water crisis is growing. Eventually, the world may witness thousands or even millions of “water refugees” – people seeking to move to where there is water – and water-rich areas need to be prepared for the influx.

Seth M. Siegel, author of a new book, *Let There Be Water: Israel’s Solution for a Water-Starved World*, has raised the alarm for water-rich cities such as Chicago to be prepared for the people and industries that may converge in these areas in their search for water. He also shared insight on how Israel, a desert country, solved its own water crisis. Siegel’s keynote presentation was part of the Jewish National Fund’s (JNF’s) Water Summit held Oct. 26 at the Fairmont Hotel in Chicago. Siegel also moderated a panel with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Commissioner Debra Shore and City of Chicago Department of Water Management Commissioner Tom Powers.

According to Siegel, Israel reuses nearly 85 per-



(L-R) “*Let There Be Water: Israel’s Solution for a Water-Starved World*” author Seth M. Siegel, MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore and City of Chicago Department of Water Management Commissioner Tom Powers participated on a panel during the Jewish National Fund’s Water Summit held Oct. 26 at the Fairmont Hotel in Chicago.

cent of its water and has over 250 reservoirs, storing more than 350 million cubic meters of this precious commodity. In contrast, there is no drinking water storage in Chicago. Powers explained that Chicago did not plan for conservation when the current infrastructure was built a hundred years ago; however, he added, the city is very cognizant of the importance of maintaining water infrastructure and has pursued an aggressive program to reduce leakage by repairing and relining old pipes. Commissioner Shore quoted Charles Fishman, author of *The Big Thirst, The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water*, pointing out that in the last century, “we moved water to people; in this century, people will move to water.” Water crises ranked first among the top 10 risks in terms of impact in the 2015 World Economic Forum list of Global Risks.

“We can’t solve the world’s water scarcity problems but we must demonstrate sound stewardship of our freshwater resources,” said Commissioner Shore. “The MWRD is beginning to look at reuse of treated wastewater for industrial and other purposes instead of using fresh Lake Michigan water. We must plan for our future by looking at water as a strategic, economic, and ecological asset.” (Continued)



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6633

public.affairs@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

October 28, 2015

Commissioner Debra Shore discusses water reuse, phosphorus recovery at JNF Water Summit Panel *(continued)*



Naty Barak, Chief Sustainability Officer of Netafim, the pioneer and global leader in drip irrigation solutions and member of the United Nations CEO Water Mandate's steering committee talks about water solutions with MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore.

Siegel pointed out that the Gulf of Mexico is a recipient of MWRD and other utility water discharges, and Commissioner Shore noted that in addition to pursuing water reuse, the MWRD is looking to recover nutrients from wastewater, including phosphorus, at its largest plant.



Attorney Harold Kaplan talks about water issues with Commissioner Debra Shore.

"We will be operating the largest phosphorus recovery facility in the world in the coming months," Commissioner Shore said.

Additional information about the Water Summit can be found at www.jnf.org/about-jnf/events/2015/water-summit/chicago/.

###

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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.