



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## New Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter, Chicago Federation of Labor Report shows clean water means jobs for Illinois

### *Efforts of MWRD, Chicago Dept. of Water Management highlighted*

A new report commissioned by the Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter and Chicago Federation of Labor highlights the work of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and city of Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM) while recognizing that investment in water infrastructure is vital to the economic, environmental and social well-being of America. All of these efforts are reliant on creating and filling jobs in the water sector.

The report highlights the benefits that investments in clean water have on the economy both locally and statewide. For every \$1 billion invested in clean water infrastructure, approximately 6,200 direct jobs are created in construction or water and sewage facilities, and 11,200 total jobs are created throughout the economy. Additionally, every \$1 billion investment brings an 8 percent one-year GDP return on investment.

"America's economy runs on water," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "Between the City of Chicago and the MWRD,

hundreds of thousands of annual jobs will be supported and billions in economic output will be produced over the next decade. When we invest in water, we put people to work, support economic growth and build a stronger foundation for our nation."

In 2014 alone, the MWRD and DWM created or saved a total of 19,400 jobs and reduced the regional unemployment rate by .73 percent.

"We are fortunate to have one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water right outside our front door, in Lake Michigan and all our Great Lakes," said Jorge Ramirez, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor. "Thanks to an initial investment by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and the City of Chicago Department of Water Management in 2014, we have already begun to see the economic and environmental benefits of investing in clean water projects in the Chicago area, namely job creation and increased worker productivity thanks to improved regional health. We need to build on this success and focus on upgrading and repairing the state's clean water infrastructure."

"Protecting Lake Michigan and restoring our rivers are not only essential for public health but also significantly contributes to a healthy economy," said Jack Darin, Director of the Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter.

For their roles in publishing the report, the organizations were honored by the MWRD Board of Commissioners with a resolution.

The report, which was prepared by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, can be found at: <http://illinoisepi.org/countrysidenonprofit/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ILEPI-PMCR-Research-Report-A-Flowing-Economy-FINAL.pdf>

For additional articles, see:

- **Progress Illinois:** <http://progressillinois.com/quick-hits/content/2016/01/07/illinois-environmental-labor-groups-highlight-economic-benefits-clean>
- **Water World:** <http://www.waterworld.com/articles/2016/01/report-clean-water-projects-employed-19-443-in-ill-in-2014.html>
- **Sierra Club:** <https://sierraclubillinois.wordpress.com/2016/01/07/new-report-shows-clean-water-means-jobs-for-illinois/>
- **Daily Whale:** <http://www.dailywhale.com/content-preview/a75c964be4456ab773115f526f118450/>

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*The Jan. 7 MWRD Board of Commissioners' meeting featured the release of a new report about the positive impact of clean water on the economy. Meeting participants included (L-R) Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter Clean Water Program Director Cynthia Skrukud; Illinois Economic Policy Institute Policy Director Frank Manzo; MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore; MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos; Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter Director Jack Darin; MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan; and Bob Reiter, secretary-treasurer of the Chicago Federation of Labor. The guest speakers announced the release of the report titled, 'A Flowing Economy: How Clean Water Infrastructure Investments Support Good Jobs in Chicago and in Illinois.'*

**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.