



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Gov. Bruce Rauner signs commitment to Millennium Reserve

In its mission to protect Lake Michigan, the Calumet River System and the local water environment, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is applauding Gov. Bruce Rauner's executive order to transform the Millennium Reserve.

The governor recently signed an executive order that will transform the public-private partnership into an independent, non-profit entity. The Millennium Reserve is building on four years of collaboration and success in advancing economic and community development and environmental improvement in the 90-square-mile area that covers the south Chicago lakeshore and Calumet region in northeast Illinois.

The MWRD is one of nearly 100 local partners that helped establish the Millennium Reserve in 2012 under the leadership of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The new independent non-profit organization will allow the Millennium Reserve to take better advantage of corporate and philanthropic support, as well as federal, state, and local grants and other support from governmental and non-governmental entities.

"As a regional entity that shares in the many environmental initiatives of the Millennium Reserve to protect our vital water environment, we want to thank Governor Rauner for continuing and broadening the potential of the Millennium Reserve, an important organization that will protect our surroundings, strengthen our communities and bolster the economy," said MWRD Commissioner David J. Walsh, who along with MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre, attended the formal signing of the executive order at ArcelorMittal, 13500 S. Perry Ave. in Riverdale on July 14.



Millennium Reserve partners, including the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago represented by Executive Director David St. Pierre (fifth from left) and Commissioner David J. Walsh (eighth from left), joined Gov. Bruce Rauner (seventh from left) at ArcelorMittal in Riverdale near the Little Calumet River to announce the governor's executive order that transforms the public-private partnership.

The governor's executive order reinstates the Illinois Millennium Reserve State Agency Task Force, charged with identifying ways for Millennium Reserve partners to access information, technical assistance and funding from the task force's member agencies. The task force includes the governor's office, IDNR, Illinois Department

of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

"The Millennium Reserve highlights how government, non-profits, and businesses can come together to pool resources around shared goals that improve Illinois communities," said Governor Rauner. "While the partnership has shown impressive results, there is an enhanced opportunity through its new independent status to engage a broader group of people, from northeast Illinois and beyond, who are passionately interested in bettering the lives of residents of the Calumet region."

Along with dozens of partners, the MWRD supports the Millennium Reserve's goal to make the most of the region's assets by honoring the cultural and industrial past of the region, restoring and enhancing the natural ecosystems, supporting healthy and prosperous communities and residents and stimulating vigorous and sustainable economic growth. The MWRD has partnered with the Millennium Reserve in its campaign to improve stormwater management through investments in and coordination of green infrastructure solutions for the area. The MWRD and stakeholders have also pushed for protection and improvement of the various waterways and wetlands, promoted the conservation and restoration of ecologically important sites, and *(continued)*

Gov. Bruce Rauner signs commitment to Millennium Reserve *(continued)*



Gov. Bruce Rauner signs an executive order that makes the Millennium Reserve an independent entity and reinstates a task force that will identify ways for partners to access information, technical assistance and attract funding from member agencies to help protect the environment and improve community and economic development in the Calumet region.

supported the Cal-Sag Trail, for which the MWRD dedicated half of the land on where the western portion of the trail was built. Other Millennium Reserve priorities include expanded outdoor recreation, brownfield redevelopment, industrial job creation, National Park Service designations and environmental education.

“As the agency responsible for the protection of our water supply source, keeping our communities from flooding and improving the quality of our water in the Calumet region and beyond, it was a natural fit for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago to become an active partner in the Millennium Reserve,” said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. “We are happy to see this organization continue and continue our commitment to the environment and the many communities we serve.”

The Millennium Reserve includes 37 south suburban municipalities stretching from Chicago’s south lakefront into the neighboring Calumet region. The groundbreaking public-private partnership of 96 government agencies, businesses and community groups will work together to stimulate economic growth in the region, restore and enhance natural ecosystems, and improve the quality of life of residents throughout the region.

“It is refreshing to be part of this greatly needed initiative,

bringing corporate, private and government entities to the table to promote and improve the region and solve problems together,” said Bill Steers, chair of the Millennium Reserve Steering Committee. Steers is general manager of communications and corporate responsibility for Arcelor-Mittal Americas, part of the world’s largest steel and mining company.

Mark Bouman, vice chair of the Millennium Reserve Steering Committee, said the nonprofit status will give the organization more flexibility going forward.

“Having nonprofit, 501(c)(3) status will give Millennium Reserve a more formal legal structure in which to operate, while continuing to work with the state, companies, nonprofits and communities as partners,” said Bouman, the Chicago region program director at the Field Museum of Natural History’s Keller Science Action Center.

Wayne Rosenthal, director of the IDNR, said his agency is excited about the potential of the organization and its wide range of partners working toward improving the environment.

“IDNR is proud to be a partner among public agencies, businesses, and nonprofits that are championing, improving, and connecting our environmental assets and building bonds beyond traditional boundaries. We are very excited about the future of Millennium Reserve,” Rosenthal said.

The MWRD, a special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, is featured this month as the Millennium Reserve’s Partner Spotlight. To read more, visit: <http://www.millenniumreserve.org/Priorities/mwrd/>.

For more information about Millennium Reserve, visit www.millenniumreserve.org. A link to the event video can be found here: http://multimedia.illinois.gov/ioci_vid/Archive/2016/WebpageOnly/GOV/071416-CalumetEO/071416-CalumetEO.mp4 and more MWRD photos can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/w4d1v8049o6unbd/AAA4VPu0ymr6RUI2hEiTeoFJa?dl=0>.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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