



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD Joins National Imagine a Day Without Water Campaign to Raise Awareness About Vulnerable Infrastructure Systems



Imagine a Day Without Water
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Today, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) joins elected officials, drinking water and wastewater providers, community leaders, business and labor groups, policy experts, advocacy organizations and infrastructure experts in promoting "Imagine a Day Without Water," an effort to educate the public about the water infrastructure crisis currently facing the United States.

Organized by the Value of Water Coalition, hundreds of organizations across the country are participating in events aimed at raising awareness about the crucial need for investment to ensure that no community in America is left without water and the infrastructure that brings it to and from homes and businesses.

"We're thrilled that the MWRD is joining Imagine a Day Without Water. This national day of action is educating public officials and engaging citizens about the essential role water plays in our lives, and the threat that aging and underfunded water infrastructure poses to our communities and economy" said Radhika Fox, CEO of the US Water Alliance and Director of the Value of Water Coalition. "Most people can take for granted that when they turn on the tap, or flush the toilet, water systems function exactly as they are supposed to. But the systems that provide critical water and wastewater services are aging, and we need to take action before it gets worse. Because a day without water is nothing short of a crisis."

The national advocacy campaign strives to educate and inspire people to value the precious resource.

"Protecting, managing and improving our area's water quality is a daily responsibility we relish," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "But while we pledge to continue our commitment to clean, safe, reliable and affordable water from our precious

front yard in Lake Michigan, we acknowledge that this luxury is no guarantee throughout the world and even locally without continued investment."

The MWRD is responsible for treating 1.2 billion gallons of water per day, servicing more than five million people from an area stretching over 883 square miles of Cook County. The MWRD's operations and capital plan investments contribute significantly to the local economy, in terms of both economic output and job creation, according to Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF). The MWRD's estimated economic contribution to the region totals \$12.6 billion over the next decade, supporting 7,350 jobs per year, according to WERF.

"Treating water for more than five million people while managing the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) and protecting the Great Lakes requires massive infrastructure," said MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila. "To eliminate pollution, prevent flooding and protect this valued water resource, the MWRD operates the world's largest water treatment facility and brought the largest reservoir online while continuing work on an even bigger reservoir."

The Value of Water Coalition reports that a water main breaks somewhere in the United States every two minutes. Most pipes have an average life expectancy of 50 years, but in many major cities, water pipes are more than 100 years old and communities cannot afford to go a day without water if those systems reach their breaking points, according to the Coalition. Without further investment, these systems will experience more frequent failures and disruptions as they try to keep up with the needs of both the modern metropolises and rural and agricultural areas they serve.

For more information about the MWRD, visit www.mwr.org. For more information about "Imagine a Day Without Water," visit: www.imagineadaywithoutwater.org.

About the Value of Water Coalition: The Value of Water Coalition is a group of thirty water and wastewater providers, water-reliant businesses and policy organizations dedicated to educating and inspiring the nation about how water is essential and in need of investment. The Value of Water Coalition is coordinated by the US Water Alliance, a national non-profit dedicated to securing a sustainable water future for all.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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