



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Pursuing clean water: U. S. Senator Duckworth visits MWRD's Calumet Plant



Alongside MWRD Commissioners Josina Morita and Kari K. Steele, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth was given a tour of the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan pumping station from engineer Reed Dring.

U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth visited the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to learn why supporting water infrastructure is vital to the planet and the people of the Chicago region.

Flanked by MWRD Commissioner Kari K. Steele and Commissioner Josina Morita, the senator visited the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant (CWRP) recently to learn first-hand about the MWRD's innovations in operations and resource recovery through the water treatment process. She was also given a tour of the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) pumping station which works to protect the region's drinking water supply, reduces pollution in local waterways, and provides an outlet for floodwaters to reduce street and basement sewage backup flooding.

"Improving our infrastructure doesn't only help grow our economy, it puts people back to work and improves our city and our state as a whole," said Senator Duckworth. "I'm glad I was able to learn more about the role the Metropolitan Water Reclamation Calumet Plant plays



(From L to R): Calumet Water Reclamation Plant (CWRP) Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations Reed Dring, MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita, Assistant Director of Engineering Tom Kunetz, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, Managing Engineer Neil Dorigan, Commissioner Kari K. Steele and Assistant Director of Maintenance and Operations Tom Conway participated in a tour and briefing to the senator on the latest innovations at CWRP.

in providing Illinois families with clean and safe water while reducing flood risks."

MWRD Assistant Director of Engineering Tom Kunetz presented the senator with an overview of the resource recovery projects taking place at CWRP, including the MWRD's plans to convert organic waste to energy to double gas production and maximize use of digester capacity. Building upon the MWRD's resource recovery model, the CWRP will soon be home to an organics recovery station and a biogas cleaning utilization facility to meet the MWRD's pursuit of energy neutrality, reducing gasoline use and lowering greenhouse gases. Construction will begin this spring on the receiving station.

"We were honored to welcome Senator Tammy Duckworth to tour the MWRD Calumet Water Reclamation Plant," said Commissioner Steele. "Moreover, Senator Duckworth truly understands the importance of helping the MWRD promote the value and (continued)

## Pursuing clean water: U.S. Senator Duckworth visits MWRD's Calumet Plant *(continued)*

importance of water infrastructure and the benefits in recovering resources while treating our wastewater.”

After hearing from MWRD officials, Senator Duckworth was taken to the bottom of the CWRP's TARP pumping station by Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations Reed Dring. The group was transported 355 feet below ground to view the equipment responsible for reducing pollution in local waterways and minimizing flooding.

“We know from other parts of the world that clean water is not always a certainty,” said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita. “Here along the Great Lakes, where we are

home to 20 percent of the world's freshwater supply, we have an obligation to become leaders in water innovation and resource recovery to ensure that our precious water quality is protected and new opportunities arise. Through Senator Duckworth's support, we are raising the bar each day, exceeding water quality standards and embracing new technologies to meet our goals.”

MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos said that “what we are looking to accomplish at the Calumet plant will help us reach our goals of energy neutrality and allow us to continue advancing our resource recovery model. We thank the senator for her support.”

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### Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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