



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Climate Week tour leads U.S. Rep. Casten to MWRD's Stickney Water Reclamation Plant to see water transformed



*MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore welcomed U.S. Rep. Sean Casten to tour the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant as part of the congressman's Climate Week tour visiting local technology leaders like the MWRD to see how clean energy is utilized to power operations at MWRD treatment facilities.*

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) welcomed U.S. Rep. Sean Casten (6th District) to the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant as part of the congressman's Climate Week tour to meet with clean energy leaders working toward climate change solutions.

The MWRD tackles climate change in many ways, treating and managing increasing amounts of stormwater following intense rain events, while also decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through innovative energy practices at its water reclamation plants (WRPs). The Stickney WRP treats up to 1.44 billion gallons of water per day to serve 2.3 million people living within 260 square miles of Cook County. Despite the energy demand to operate this flow of water, the MWRD has decreased GHG emissions by 30.5 percent relative to 2005 levels, and projections show that those emission levels will potentially decrease to approximately 50 percent, thanks in part to the addition of new treatment infrastructure at Stickney WRP.



*U.S. Rep. Sean Casten toured the MWRD's nutrient recovery facility, which helps remove phosphorus from the wastewater stream and recover it as a water-insoluble, slow release fertilizer that addresses both nutrient loss and water quality. Despite being essential for life, existing rock phosphate reserves are being depleted across the world.*

“Representative Casten's Climate Week visit to Stickney Water Reclamation Plant highlights MWRD's role as a clean energy leader working to protect the environment,” said Commissioner Debra Shore. “We support the congressman's efforts to promote sustainable energy sources, reduce carbon emissions, and protect the environment at home and throughout the world.”

Rep. Casten toured Stickney WRP facilities along with MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore. They visited the pump and blower building, control room, nutrient recovery facility and other treatment tanks and infrastructure to review critical plant operations that work toward cleaning wastewater and recovering resources in addition to water. The MWRD recovers energy by producing biogas through its anaerobic digesters to fuel boilers that heat buildings and processes at the WRP's. The MWRD also removes nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen from Stickney WRPs treatment streams, recovering more than 20.4 million pounds of total phosphorus (*continued*)

## Climate Week tour leads U.S. Rep. Casten to MWRD's Stickney WRP, *cont.*

and approximately 90.9 million pounds of total nitrogen per year, a portion of which is recovered as struvite in reactors to be beneficially reused as fertilizer.

"I toured the MWRD's Stickney Plant to see the innovative clean energy practices in their wastewater treatment operation," said Rep. Casten. "Their diverse approach utilizes biogas, compost, thermal energy, and hydropower to help power their plant."

The tour was part of the congressman's local Climate Week tour to see how area residents, businesses, utilities and industry can protect the environment and work toward solutions to climate change. The congressman held a town hall event on climate change and a roundtable dis-

cussion about its effect on the Great Lakes, and he made stops at the Argonne National Laboratory and Navistar among other visits.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to host Rep. Casten on his Climate Week tour and proud to be included as a leader tackling this key issue," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "The science behind resourceful wastewater treatment can be fascinating as much as it is critically important to the work of protecting water resources. We are appreciative of Rep. Casten's commitment to addressing climate change, his engineering acumen for our work in protecting the water environment, and his support at home and in Washington, D.C."

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### ***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.*