



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

**Allison Fore**

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

[allison.fore@mwr.org](mailto:allison.fore@mwr.org)

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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## MWRD commissioners salute new House Speaker Welch

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners passed a resolution honoring the state's first black Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Emanuel "Chris" Welch.

Speaker Welch has been an instrumental partner to the MWRD, striving to protect the region's water environment and address flooding issues, most recently partnering with the MWRD and local municipalities in the west suburbs to deliver the MWRD's Addison Creek Reservoir and Channel improvements projects.

These critical flood control projects will provide significant benefits to communities along Addison Creek, including Bellwood, Northlake, Stone Park, Melrose Park, Westchester and Broadview. The 600-acre-foot Addison Creek Reservoir, located in Speaker Welch's district in Bellwood, will hold close to 200 million gallons of storage capacity and connect with the Addison Creek Channel. The MWRD project is on track for completion by late 2022.

"We are proud to recognize Speaker Welch as a partner and strong advocate for our water environment," said MWRD Board President Kari K. Steele. "We applaud Speaker Welch and the Illinois House of Representatives on his historic election as house speaker, and we look forward to many years of collaboration. His dedication and accomplishments as a new leader for



*Before the pandemic, MWRD President Kari K. Steele and commissioners met with House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch and other legislators during annual visits to Springfield to strengthen partnerships to address flooding and water quality issues.*

our state are reminders that perceived barriers are not impediments but challenges that inspire greater achievements."

Speaker Welch began serving in the Illinois House in 2013, before being elected by his colleagues as House Speaker on Jan. 13, 2021. He was born in Chicago, attended Proviso West High School in Hillside, earned a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University's School of Communication and earned a law degree from John Marshall Law School (now UIC John Marshall Law School).

*(continued)*

# MWRD commissioners salute new House Speaker Welch, *cont.*



Workers survey Addison Creek Reservoir.

“It was a pleasure working with Speaker Welch when I served as a member of the Illinois General Assembly,” said MWRD Commissioner Kimberly Du Buclet. “Speaker Welch has worked diligently in his role as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives to serve his constituents and improve our quality of life in Illinois.”

# # #

## METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT of GREATER CHICAGO RESOLUTION

SPONSORED by the BOARD of COMMISSIONERS ACKNOWLEDGING  
SPEAKER of the ILLINOIS HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

### EMANUEL “CHRIS” WELCH

**WHEREAS**, for the first time in the 203-year history of the State of Illinois, an African American has been elected as the presiding officer of its legislative branch's lower house. On January 13, 2021, Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch was elected the 70th speaker of the House of Representatives for the 102nd Illinois General Assembly. Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch's name will be etched into history alongside of others such as John W.E. Thomas, the first African American elected to the legislature in 1877; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 20, 2012, Representative Welch won the Democratic primary to serve the 7th District in the Illinois House of Representatives.

He ran unopposed in the general election and was officially elected on November 6, 2012. Representative Welch began serving his first term in the Illinois House of Representatives in January of 2013. Since that time, Representative Welch has successfully defended his seat; and

**WHEREAS**, while serving in the Illinois House of Representatives, Representative Welch has served on the following committees: Appropriations-Elementary and Secondary Education, Appropriations-Higher Education, Cities and Villages, Counties and Townships, Elementary and Secondary Education School Curriculum Policies, Executive (Chairman), Health Care Availability Access, Higher Education (as Committeeman, Vice-Chairman, and Chairman), Insurance, Judiciary-Civil, Judiciary-Criminal, Labor and Commerce, Revenue and Finance, Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development, Substance Abuse, and Transportation-Regulation, Roads, and Bridges; and

**WHEREAS**, among his many honors, Representative Welch has received the Zeke Giorgi Award from the AFL-CIO, the Friend and Education Award from the Illinois Education Association, and was a 2016 inductee into the John Marshall Law School Wall of Fame; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch was born in Chicago, Illinois. In 1989, Representative Welch graduated from Proviso West High School in Hillside, Illinois. Following graduation, he attended Northwestern University where he earned his Bachelor's degree from the School of Communication. In 1997, Representative Welch graduated from John Marshall Law School (now UIC John Marshall Law School) with his Juris Doctorate; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch is a leader and a role model. He has demonstrated through his numerous accomplishments that hard work and dedication are the principles of success. He is a reminder that perceived barriers are not impediments but in fact challenges that inspire greater achievements; and

**WHEREAS**, Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; and



**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, on behalf of ourselves and staff, do hereby acknowledge the achievement of Representative Emanuel “Chris” Welch being elected as the first Black Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and that a copy of same, suitably engrossed, be presented to Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Emanuel “Chris” Welch.

DATED THIS 18<sup>th</sup> DAY of FEBRUARY, 2021.

#### BOARD of COMMISSIONERS

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*Recovering Resources, Transforming Water*

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrld.org](http://mwrld.org).