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Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 EAST ERIE STREET

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611-3154

312-751-5600

Patricia Young

Manager of Public Affairs
312.751.6626 f: 312.751.6635
patricia.young@mwr.org

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MWRD BOARD ADOPTS POLICY TO DISINFECT EFFLUENT FROM NORTH SIDE AND CALUMET PLANTS

(Chicago--) Today Board members of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) adopted a policy to disinfect the effluent discharged from its North Side and Calumet water reclamation plants. The motion directs the MWRD's Acting Executive Director Kevin Fitzpatrick to begin the process to study, plan, design and construct disinfection facilities at the two plants.

It is anticipated that disinfection of MWRD plant effluent will be necessary to meet proposed standards currently before the Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) that deem Chicago area waterways not only suitable for "secondary" contact – boating and recreating on the waterways, but for "primary" contact as well, which includes swimming.

A caveat included in the motion, which was brought to the floor by Commissioner Cynthia Santos, is that the executive director conduct a series of public hearings to keep Cook county residents and business owners involved in the process and apprised of the costs, which are estimated to be upwards of \$240 million for the capital construction costs, and more than \$26 million per year for maintenance and operation.

The motion also requests that staff explore various avenues of funding from federal, state and other local governmental sources to lessen the burden for MWRD tax payers, which are estimated to increase current tax bills paid to the MWRD by 12 to 15 per cent.

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