



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

For immediate release

September 19, 2019

Illinois State Senator Ram Villivalam tours MWRD's O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant



Senator Ram Villivalam, center, explores the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant's aeration tanks.

Illinois State Sen. Ram Villivalam (8th District) and his staff recently toured the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant in Skokie, IL to learn more about the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) role in cleaning 1.4 billion gallons of wastewater each day while recovering resources and preventing waterway pollution.

Senator Villivalam and members of the Monroe County Farm Bureau toured operations and learned about the MWRD's flood control measures, such as TARP and the requirements for development under the Watershed Management Ordinance. Originally organized as the Sanitary District of Chicago in 1889 under an act of the Illinois General Assembly, the MWRD was created in direct response to the problem of water supply contamination and nuisance conditions of area rivers.

"While farmers from Monroe County and folks from Cook County may live in different areas of the state, we're all facing the challenges that come with intense flooding," said Villivalam. "For the farmers, this flooding is a



(L-R) Kim Iu, TPO II; Lynn Kohlhaas, Operations Manager; Mike Henry; Daniel Rahe, Monroe County Farm Bureau, Board Member; Senator Ram Villivalam; Brenda Seboldt; and Bruce Brinkman, Monroe County Farm Bureau President.

very real threat to their livelihood and I'm glad we were able to facilitate a conversation with MWRD experts who could delve into flood management ideas that they can take back to Monroe County."

The O'Brien WRP has been in operation since October 3, 1928 and treats an average of 230 million gallons/day. During wet weather, it can treat up to 450 million gallons/day. The treated water is then discharged to the North Shore Channel.

"I have known the Senator for many years and it's great to see him taking time to speak with our staff and learn more about our processes," said Commissioner Josina Morita.

"We appreciate Senator Villivalam's visit and are always ready to provide behind the scenes tours so the public and our state leaders can better understand how the MWRD effectively manages tax dollars," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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