



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Annual audit confirms the MWRD's resilient finances



Clean financial health allows the MWRD to protect the region's clean water environment at places like the MWRD's sidestream elevated pool aeration station in Blue Island, where oxygen is pumped into the Cal-Sag Channel.

Financial audits continue to underscore the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) strong financial position.

The MWRD's Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs) for 2019 are now posted at mwrdd.org/finances. The CAFRs, comprised of both audits of the MWRD and MWRD Retiree Health Care Trust, include the re-

spective financial statements and other data necessary to reflect the true financial condition and operations of the MWRD as of and for the year ending December 31, 2019.

Despite turbulent economic times in 2020, the MWRD CAFR highlights that the MWRD maintained a clean bill of financial health in 2019 to better prepare the agency to withstand any uncertainty. *(continued)*

Annual audit confirms the MWRD's resilient finances, *cont.*

"I would like to thank MWRD Treasurer Mary Ann Boyle, Director of Finance and Clerk Jackie Torres, and their staff for their diligent work in preparing the 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports," said MWRD Commissioner Frank Avila, chairman of the MWRD's Finance Committee. "Preparation of these reports reflect the combined efforts of the dedicated professionals of the operating and support departments. I want to acknowledge their expertise, enthusiasm, and focus on excellence. Taxpayers may fully rely on the 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report as a fair and accurate presentation of the financial position and operational results of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago."

RSM US LLP, independent auditor, examined the basic financial statements of the MWRD and the MWRD Retiree Health Care Trust. In its opinions, RSM officials stated: "The financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, as of December 31, 2019, and the respective changes in financial position and the respective budgetary comparisons for the General Corporate Fund and the Retirement Fund thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

The reports continue to cement the MWRD's reputation and commitment for strong finances. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded the MWRD and the Retiree Health Care Trust with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the CAFR reports for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018. This marks the 44th and 12th straight year that the MWRD and Retiree Health Care Trust were recognized with this honor, respectively. Officials with the MWRD will seek the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for the 2019

CAFR reports. In addition, the MWRD maintains a AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings and a AA+ bond rating from Standard & Poor's.

"The MWRD prides itself on maintaining strong finances, while providing an essential service to homes and businesses throughout Cook County at an affordable cost," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele.

A strong fund balance, along with an emphasis on controlling expenditures, allows the MWRD to protect its operations from economically sensitive revenues stemming from fiscal constraints at the federal and state levels.

In 2020, \$20 million of accumulated interest income was transferred into the MWRD's Retirement Fund, illustrating the MWRD's commitment to stable pension reserves.

The MWRD also recently updated its investment policy calling for sustainability factors to be regularly considered when evaluating investments. This allows the MWRD to consider environmental, social, governance/leadership (ESG), human capital, and business model/innovation factors in addition to financial factors when evaluating investments that bolster the MWRD's finances for construction, operating funds, and debt service funds.

The MWRD's 2020 budget is \$1.15 billion, which is a 5.7 percent reduction from the 2019 adjusted budget of \$1.22 billion, a savings of more than \$70.3 million. The MWRD serves 10 million people each day, treating 1.47 billion gallons of wastewater every 24 hours at seven water reclamation plants. The MWRD also serves as the regional authority for stormwater management for Cook County, controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways, owns and operates 34 stormwater detention reservoirs to provide regional flood protection, and manages the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, which includes 109 miles of tunnels and three major reservoirs to protect area waterways from pollution and mitigate flooding in communities served by combined sewer systems across 375 square miles.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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