



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## MWRD commissioners adopt balanced 2023 budget ensuring protection for water environment, public health



*MWRD President Kari K. Steele signs the adopted ordinances authorizing the levy of taxes that will allow the MWRD budget to deliver its critical services in 2023.*



*MWRD Commissioner and Budget and Employment Vice Chair Kimberly Du Buclet signs the adopted ordinances authorizing the levy of taxes that will allow the MWRD budget to deliver its critical services in 2023.*

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners formally approved a \$1.4-billion budget for 2023. This budget will allow staff to continue protecting local waterways and Lake Michigan, managing stormwater and mitigating flooding throughout Cook County, and transforming wastewater into clean water for 5.19 million residents living in Chicago and 128 surrounding communities.

“This fiscally responsible and transparent budget strives to protect the communities across Cook County,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “These resources allow us to complete our incredibly important mission of protecting the health and safety of the public by improving our environment to make the Chicago region a better place to call home. We thank the taxpayers for their trust and support.”

The budget was passed on Dec. 15 and is supported by a 2023 tax levy of \$679.2 million, which represents a

modest decrease from the adjusted 2022 tax levy. The MWRD’s operations are funded primarily through property tax receipts. Other sources include user charge revenues, personal property replacement tax receipts (PPRT) and land rentals, as well as state revolving fund loans, grants and general obligation bond sales.

The 2023 budget will support the MWRD’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which funds the modernization of aging infrastructure, the MWRD’s Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, and the implementation of innovative technologies at the MWRD’s seven water reclamation plants.

The Stormwater Management Fund budget supports the Cook County Stormwater Management Plan in reducing flooding throughout Cook County. Projects include Addison Creek Reservoir and Channel Improvements, the 1st Avenue Flood Control Project from Roosevelt Road to Cermak Road, the *(continued)*

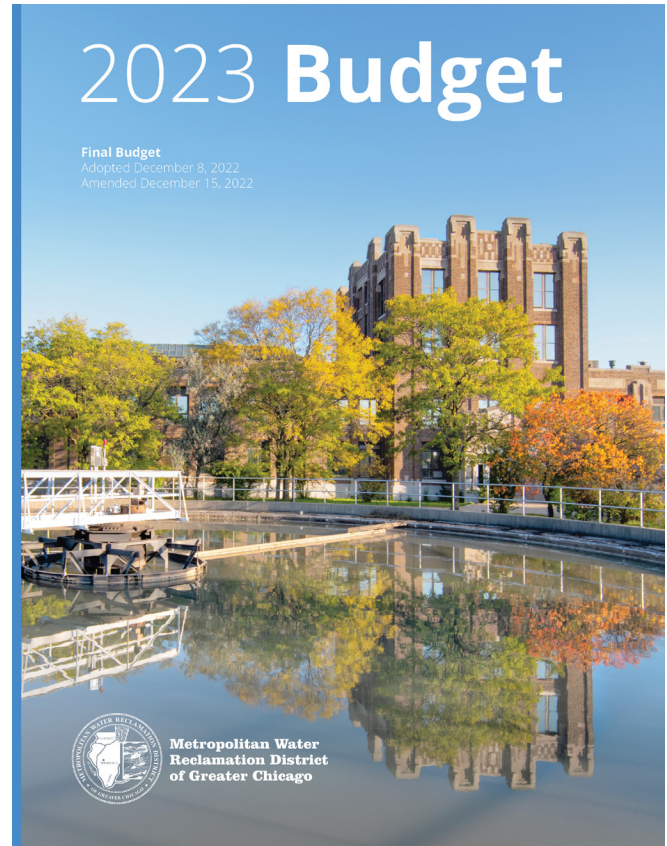
## MWRD commissioners adopt balanced 2023 budget, *cont.*

Crestwood Flood Control Project, the Tinley Creek Streambank Stabilization Project, and green infrastructure partnership projects with local communities.

The MWRD will leverage federal funding in 2023, primarily for stormwater management projects. Funds from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will help the MWRD advance its Robbins Stormwater Park and Midlothian Creek restoration work. The project will increase the existing stormwater drainage system, mitigate flooding for homes and businesses and strengthen the community. It also serves as a model project, showing that by addressing stormwater management, other economic development and recreational opportunities may arise.

The MWRD's budget highlights a continued commitment to fulfilling its pension obligations. The MWRD will make a supplemental contribution of \$30 million from Corporate Fund budgetary reserves to the Retirement Fund to maintain the funded ratio. The 2023 Budget will also continue to fund \$5 million annually to the OPEB (Other Postemployment Benefits) Trust Fund, which is projected to be fully funded by 2026 to ensure retiree benefits.

As the MWRD embarks on year three of a five-year Strategic Plan, it continues its vision of resource recovery, sustainability, resilience, and innovation, investing \$7.6 million in new projects and initiatives related to the Strategic Plan, including \$400,000 for diversity programming. The Strategic Plan focuses on the values of excellence, respect, innovation, safety, equity and diversity, and accountability, while setting different goals in resource management, stormwater management, work force excellence, community engagement and enterprise resilience. In meeting these goals, the MWRD recently created a community partnership council for its Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, launched a public-facing Strategic Plan hub to share data benchmarks, implemented an employer-funded health reimbursement account, and was granted legislative authority to issue up to \$600 million in pension obligation bonds.



“It takes a balanced budget that gives us the critical resources to deliver water reclamation services and stormwater management while also promoting sustainability and resource recovery innovation,” said MWRD Commissioner and Budget and Employment Vice Chair Kimberly Du Buclet. “I thank our Management and Budget Section, Treasury and Finance Departments for preparing a budget that delivers for our taxpayers.”

The MWRD maintains a stable financial outlook with an AAA credit rating from Fitch Ratings and AA+ rating from S&P Global. In 2022, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded the MWRD with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2021 Budget and Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the MWRD, the MWRD Retirement Fund and the MWRD Retiree Health Care Trust.

### *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).*