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NEWS

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Governor Quinn Announces Clean Water Project to Create 2,000 Jobs and Protect Environment

Illinois Clean Water Initiative Will Invest \$250 Million to Update Wastewater Treatment, Reduce Flooding and Clean Up Chicago Area Waterways

CHICAGO – February 11, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn today awarded a \$250 million low-interest loan to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to move forward with crucial projects to update the region's water infrastructure, clean up area rivers and improve public health. Financed through the governor's Illinois Clean Water Initiative (ICWI), the projects will create 2,000 construction-related jobs and support an additional 8,000 jobs in local communities.

In October 2012, Governor Quinn launched the \$1 billion Clean Water Initiative to help local governments overhaul aging drinking water and wastewater treatment plants and pipelines. The Illinois Clean Water Initiative, which does not use any new state tax dollars, will create an estimated 28,500 jobs across Illinois.

"Today we are taking a big step forward to clean up Chicago area waterways and create thousands of good jobs," Governor Quinn said. "We are committed to making Illinois a national leader in clean water, which will lay the foundation for a stronger economy for generations to come."

Governor Quinn was joined for today's announcement at the MWRD's Calumet pumping station by MWRD Board President Kathleen Therese Meany, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA); Director John Kim, Illinois Finance Authority (IFA); and Executive Director Chris Meister and labor leaders.

Among the first projects to be financed through the ICWI is a major upgrade to an MWRD pumping station that is part of the multi-billion dollar Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP). The ICWI will finance disinfection equipment to treat out-flowing water at the MWRD's Calumet facility and O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant in Skokie. The ICWI will provide financing for other projects to prevent flooding and reduce pollution using sustainable management technology to capture phosphorus and nitrogen.

"The nutrient removal projects are aimed at resource recovery with a return on investment for our taxpayers," MWRD Board President Kathleen Therese Meany said. "These processes are on the cutting edge of treatment technology and will transform the wastewater industry into a resource recovery enterprise."

The Calumet MWRD facility was constructed in 1985 as part of TARP to pump combined sewer overflows captured in the deep tunnel system into a main for transfer and treatment. About \$35 million in low-interest ICWI financing will be used to reconstruct two pump rooms, each with a capacity of 150 million gallons per day, using state-of-the-art pumping equipment to divert storm water and combined sewer overflows for treatment rather than allow it to go directly into waterways.

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"Illinois EPA has had a long working relationship with the MWRD, including previously administering \$465 million in low-interest loans for TARP," IEPA Director John Kim said. "Governor Quinn's Clean Water Initiative will accelerate these continued MWRD improvements that will result in great returns for the environment and economy of Northeast Illinois."

"We're putting thousands of unionized building trades workers back to work, cutting the cost to local governments of financing clean water projects and ensuring safe drinking water for consumers, IFA Executive Director Chris Meister said. "It's win-win-win."

MWRD projects will put to work thousands of tradesmen, including Carpenters, Cement Masons, Electricians, Iron Workers, Laborers, Machinists, Material Testers, Pipefitters, Operating Engineers, Painters and Truck Drivers.

"The jobs created by the Clean Water Initiative are good-paying jobs, since a prevailing wage requirement is part of each project," James F. Coyne, business manager of Plumbers Local 130 said. "For our region to thrive we need a modern, well-built water infrastructure, and this partnership will help MWRD achieve that."

The MWRD operates one of the world's largest wastewater collection and treatment systems, handling sewage for more than 5.25 million residents, thousands of businesses and industries in Chicago and 125 suburban communities spread across 883 square miles. The MWRD has 554 miles of intercepting sewers and force mains and more than 10,000 local sewer system connections, as well as seven treatment plants and 23 pumping stations able to treat more than two billion gallons per day

Governor Quinn proposed the ICWI in his 2012 State of the State Address, and directed the IEPA and IFA to expand the State Revolving Fund from \$300 million to \$1 billion annually. The Initiative is funded with annual federal grants, funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and additional principal and interest from loan repayments. No new state tax dollars are used. Needed equity is provided by the existing loan portfolio and future federal capitalization dollars.

Governor Quinn has already awarded \$4.8 to Pekin, Illinois to upgrade its wastewater treatment facility and \$15 million to Chicago to replace seven miles of drinking water pipes, some of which are a century old. Since 1989, IEPA has lent \$4.3 billion to 472 communities; there has never been a single defaulted loan during the program' history.

A list of projects funded by today's announcement is attached.

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Future MWRD projects that will be financed with CWI low-interest loans include:

- \$117 million for disinfection facilities at the Calumet and O'Brien Water Reclamation Plants to meet proposed fecal coliform standards. Chlorination will be used at the Calumet plant to kill bacteria before wastewater is released into the Little Calumet River. Ultraviolet lamps will be used for disinfection at the O'Brien plant to kill bacteria before wastewater is released into the North Shore Channel just north of the Chicago River. The deal will allow the O'Brien project to proceed a year sooner than anticipated.
- \$30 million for a Wet Weather Treatment Facility at the Lemont Water Reclamation Plant to better manage storm water.
- \$18 million for replacement of the O'Brien Sludge Pipeline, an 18-mile pipe which carries sludge from the O'Brien facility in Skokie to the Stickney facility for treatment and disposal. Built in the 1960s, it has developed a number of breaks resulting in sludge leakage. This project will replace pipeline in Skokie, Lincolnwood and Chicago, with construction expected this summer.
- \$15 million for a phosphorus recovery system at the Stickney Water Reclamation plant, with the loan allowing MWRD to push ahead with this sustainable resource management project a year ahead of schedule. It will recover phosphorus that would otherwise be discharged into waterways and convert it into a form that can be sold to the fertilizer industry, offsetting treatment costs and avoiding the environmental impact of rock mining this product.
- \$10.6 million for rehabilitation of the 95-year old Des Plaines River Interceptor Sewer 1 that serves the Villages of Westchester, Broadview, Bellwood, Berkeley, Hillside, Maywood, Melrose Park, River Forest and Forest Park. The aging sewer has cracks and infiltration that will be sealed with a new sewer liner.
- \$10 million for a state-of-the-art advanced biological process at the Egan Wastewater Reclamation Plant in Schaumburg to remove nitrogen from pollutants while cutting energy usage by 40 percent to treat this flow.
- \$9.1 million to rehabilitate mechanical and electrical components of the TARP tunnel systems to improve safety, prevent flooding and maintain functionality for another 30 years.
- \$5.6 million to reduce nuisance odors from the corroded Upper Des Plaines Intercepting Sewer. Construction is expected in June.

To learn more about the Illinois Clean Water Initiative, visit CleanWater.Illinois.gov.

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