



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Egyptian diplomats meet with local officials to discuss water

When it comes to water availability, Egypt is a country that faces plenty of struggles: the terrain is composed of 90 percent desert, rainfall is limited, and residents receive most of their drinking water from the Nile River. These factors make water a precious commodity in Egypt. To better understand how the country can meet some of its water-related challenges, Egyptian Consul General Maged Refaat and Deputy Consul General Mohamed Elbaz met with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Chairman of Finance Mariyana Spyropoulos at the MWRD's downtown Chicago office recently.



In the photo: (L-R) MWRD Chairman of Finance Mariyana Spyropoulos is joined by MWRD Director of Engineering Dr. Catherine O'Connor, Egyptian Consul General Maged Refaat and Deputy Consul General Mohamed Elbaz during a recent visit.

Commissioner Spyropoulos provided background on MWRD, a special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. MWRD's mission is to protect the drinking water supply, Lake Michigan, for Chicago and 125 suburban communities. Since it operates the world's largest water reclamation plant in addition to six other plants and 23 pumping stations, Commissioner Spyropoulos explained to Consul General Refaat and Deputy Consul General Elbaz how the MWRD faced a challenge of its own in the early 19th century which resulted in the construction of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal which carries treated water away from the lake.

"Our region is fortunate to have a fresh water supply nearby," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "A great deal of study and effort helped make our facilities and processes what they are today, and our work has made the entire region livable."

Consul General Refaat is a career diplomat and has represented Egypt in Chicago since 2011. His prior assignments include New York, Belgium, Bahrain, Russia, and Nigeria. He has been gathering best water management practices from around the world to help make Egypt a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Commissioner Spyropoulos will continue working with Consul General Refaat and provide him with a tour of the Stickney water reclamation plant facility in Cicero, IL so he can see firsthand how wastewater and stormwater are received and treated. More wastewater and stormwater is treated than at any other facility in the world. "It's great to share ideas with leaders from other countries," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "We learn so much from each other, and that benefits everyone."

Group tours of MWRD water reclamation plants are available by contacting 312-751-6633. Tour participants learn about the logistics of water intake procedures, water aeration, how biosolids can be used and visit laboratories to see how industrial wastewater is regularly tested and monitored for contaminants.

Our water environment, take it personally.

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