



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Media Advisory

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6633

public.affairs@mwr.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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MWRD, U.S. EPA, IEPA to break ground on Skokie disinfection project

Who: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the MWRD.

What: Groundbreaking for disinfection facilities at O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant

When: 10 a.m. on Monday, September 16, 2013

Where: O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant, 3500 Howard Street, Skokie, IL

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Administrator Susan Hedman, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director Lisa Bonnett and other area leaders will join the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners to break ground on the disinfection facility at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant (WRP), 3500 Howard Street, Skokie, on Monday, Sept. 16 at 10 a.m. The McCracken Middle School band will also perform prior to the start of the program.

Ground will also be broken for the disinfection facility at the Calumet WRP on Chicago's south side. The work should be completed by December 2015, ahead of the 2016 recreational season. The MWRD's Thornton Reservoir, which will also dramatically improve water quality in the Calumet region, is scheduled to go online at the same time.

"We are proud to begin the construction of disinfection facilities at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant and at our Calumet Water Reclamation Plant," said MWRD President Kathleen Meany. "These facilities are the important next step in the transformation of Chicago area waterways into a second lakefront."

Significant support for these projects has come from local, state and federal leadership. In 2011, U.S. Senators Richard Durbin and Mark Kirk and Congressman Mike Quigley toured the Chicago area waterways and announced their support for the disinfection projects. In April 2012, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Governor Quinn, and the U.S. EPA awarded the MWRD \$10 million through the Illinois Jobs Now! capital program. That funding supplemented the \$21 million in engineering and design costs needed to make the MWRD's disinfection facilities possible. In addition to directly improving the water environment, the two disinfection projects will create 750 construction, operations and support jobs.

"The Chicago River is one of the most important waterways in Illinois and it should be protected," Governor Quinn said. "This project will not only create hundreds of jobs now, it will improve the quality of life of everyone who enjoys the river and help attract tourism that will boost Illinois' economy."

"I am committed to establishing the Chicago River as the city's next recreational frontier and confident in its potential to foster economic opportunity throughout our city and neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "I am fully supportive of the MWRD's efforts to improve their processes and the water quality of the river which moves us toward our goals for this wonderful resource."