



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Gov. Quinn signs important flood legislation for Cook County residents

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn today signed House Bill 3912 which authorizes the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to acquire flood-prone properties and to proceed with local stormwater projects where previously only regional projects were authorized. HB 3912 was widely supported by Cook County municipal associations, the Council of Governments and agencies with whom the MWRD works to address stormwater management across Cook County. The MWRD is grateful to the House and the Senate for passing this bill with 100 percent support and thankful that the General Assembly recognized the importance of this bill.

“These two new tools added to the District’s capability will provide needed flood relief assistance to Cook County residents,” said MWRD President Kathleen Therese Meany. “We are especially grateful to Representative Elaine Nekritz and Senator Daniel Biss who carried this bill forward in their respective chambers. We are also thankful to all the groups who supported this legislation.”

In 2004, the MWRD assumed responsibility for stormwater management in Cook County, and since then, the agency has designed and has underway over \$300 million in regional stormwater projects. These projects yield over \$400 million in benefits. These projects will not address localized flooding which generally occurs away from major waterways and to which requires different solutions. Expanding storm sew-

ers, culvert modifications and green infrastructure projects like permeable parking lots and rain gardens are the types of solutions necessary to mitigate flooding in these areas. In other cases, there is no reasonable solution other than acquiring these properties and returning them to open space.

The MWRD will soon schedule a public study session to discuss the development of policy guidelines for the property purchase program with the Board of Commissioners. Once approved, the MWRD will accept applications through their respective communities from interested homeowners who have experienced multiple flooding events. MWRD staff will prioritize submittals and develop a priority matrix for submitted property purchases. The MWRD will then begin the process of acquiring properties, demolishing buildings and turning them over to the appropriate government agency.

After the April 2013 rain event that resulted in the third national disaster declaration in three years, the Board of Commissioners approved a Phase II stormwater concept. Phase II focuses on local flooding issues. Over the past year, MWRD staff has collected shovel ready projects from the 133 communities in Cook County. In addition, project areas have been identified which need further study or design. Shovel ready projects will be advertised for bid and needed work performed. Projects needing design or study will be assigned engineering teams and start as soon as possible.

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**Our Water Environment: Take it personally**

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*