



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Productive legislative day for MWRD key to statewide partnership



From L to R: MWRD President Kari K. Steele, Commissioners Kim Du Buclet, Debra Shore, Frank Avila, Cam Davis, and Marcelino Garcia (not pictured) met with members of the Illinois General Assembly recently at the State Capitol in Springfield.

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Commissioners met with lawmakers in Springfield recently to strengthen partnerships and bolster protection of the area's water environment during an annual legislative day visit to the Illinois State Capitol.

Coping with major rain events this spring, Cook County's resilience has strengthened thanks to synergies with our elected officials. Commissioners and staff met with legislative leaders in both the House and Senate.

President Kari K. Steele, Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and Commissioners Debra Shore, Kim Du Buclet, Cam Davis and Marcelino Garcia expressed their gratitude to the leaders and members of the Illinois General Assembly for allowing the MWRD to pursue initiatives that make the organization a leading wastewater treatment agency that is admired and respected around the world for its innovative resource recovery efforts, the enormity of its service area and long-running tradition of excellence.

"Thank you to our lawmakers in Springfield for their support and collaboration in protecting our region's water environment," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele.



MWRD Commissioners met with legislators in Springfield.

"It's important that they understand our mission and that our goals align as they enact new laws that could one day address our region's water quality. We are appreciative to the leadership and reception from Senate President John Cullerton, Senate Republican Leader Bill Brady, House Republican Leader Jim Durkin, Senate Assistant Majority Leader Antonio Munoz and the many lawmakers who engaged with us to consider our important work and partnerships."

Serving Chicago and 128 suburban communities across an 882-square-mile-area, the MWRD treats an average of 1.38 billion gallons of wastewater per day for 10 million people, including 5.25 million residents, 4.5 million in the commercial and industrial sector and a combined sewer overflow equivalent of 600,000. The MWRD also serves as the regional stormwater authority, protecting homes and businesses from flooding in Cook County, while also protecting the health and safety of the service area, protecting the quality of the water supply source in Lake Michigan, and improving the quality of water in local waterways. The award-winning agency is responsible for reversing the flow of the Chicago and Calumet River Systems in the early 1900s, the construction of 61 miles of waterways and the famed Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, also known as the "Deep Tunnel," which operates each day to protect water quality in area waterways and defend the region from flooding.

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Productive legislative day for MWRD key to statewide partnership *(cont.)*



Senate Majority Leader Cullerton spoke with MWRD Board of Commissioners and staff.



Illinois Senate Minority leader Bill Brady met with MWRD Commissioners and staff in the Senator's office.



Illinois House Minority leader Jim Durkin discusses the current state of activities at the statehouse.



(L-R) Rep. Marcus C. Evans, Jr., Rep. Fran Hurley, Rep. Nicholas K. Smith, MWRD President Kari K. Steele and Representative Chris Welch gather in Springfield.

Despite changing weather patterns and other modern challenges, the MWRD continues to maintain a AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings and a AA+ bond rating from Standard & Poor's, while also gaining the support of the Civic Federation for its 2019 budget in developing a strong capital improvement plan and five-year financial forecast and maintaining a proactive approach to contributing toward its retirement fund.

The MWRD's annual legislative day promotes the MWRD's many legislative initiatives that have consistently garnered bi-partisan support. From pension reform and providing authority to work on local stormwater projects

to voluntary buyouts for flood-prone properties, resource recovery authorization and recognition of exceptional quality biosolids as a soil amendment alternative, the support from the General Assembly has been immeasurable, commissioners said.

"Together with this critical support of the Illinois General Assembly, we are working to protect our taxpayers and the water environment so that future generations are proud to call these communities home," said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita. "Thank you to our lawmakers for their collaboration."

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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.