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Letter to the Editor, The Chicago Tribune, Response to a recent *Chicago Confidential* column.

December 15, 2009

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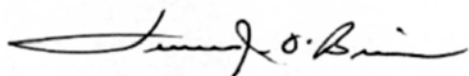
Melissa Harris' *Chicago Confidential* column item titled "Alley Oops" of December 9, 2009 does a disservice to readers by shoddily referring to the legal action taken by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). Her comments misrepresent the intent of MWRD's actions as they relate to the alley adjacent to our headquarters and the construction of a residential building next to it.

Ms. Harris' opinion that the efforts of MWRD are frivolous - that MWRD is "scrapping over an alley" - is biased. She offered selective facts instead of providing readers accurate information.

The alley is a taxpayer-owned property. Given the water-related management operations performed by the agency in the adjacent building, legitimate security concerns associated with the alley exist. It was necessary for MWRD to protect the property and seek a declaration of "parties' rights". The Cook County Circuit Court found MWRD indeed has legitimate security concerns and needs to protect the property rights associated behind the parcels at 644, 666 and 670 North Michigan Avenue.

Ms. Harris is correct in stating that the legal wrangling is far from over. Unfortunately, it is the developer's actions that have continued the "wrangling". The MWRD has never sought to prevent the developer from pursuing development of the property. What MWRD tried to prevent is the improper use of a publicly-owned alley; one that cannot be impaired or placed at risk of security. In addition to the hundreds of staff persons, executive officers, elected officials and the general public in the MWRD headquarters, the highly sophisticated control room MWRD uses to manage the Chicago Area Waterways is located in this building.

While some may assert that our legal action is unnecessary and costly, MWRD believes it is valid. Today, government agencies are forced to protect buildings, facilities, entrances, exits, and yes, even alleys in order to protect the health and safety of the public.



President
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago