

Protecting Our Water Environment



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 EAST ERIE STREET

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611-3154

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Terrence J. O'Brien
President
Kathleen Therese Meany
Vice President
Gloria Alitto Majewski
Chairman of Finance
Frank Avila
Patricia Horton
Barbara J. McGowan
Cynthia M. Santos
Debra Shore
Mariyana T. Spyropoulos

312-751-5600

Office Public Affairs
312-751-6633
fax - 312-751-6635

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 29, 2010

Reduction of Phosphorus in Cleaning Products Starts July 1

Chicago – The long-awaited reduction of phosphorus in dish washing detergents and other household cleaning products goes into effect July 1, 2010, after years of lobbying by officials of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and other environmental groups. Automatic dish washing detergents (ADWD) and other cleaning supplies will not be permitted to contain more than .5 per cent of phosphorus by weight in their products.

Phosphorus is a nutrient and if allowed to enter the waterways, promotes the production of algae, which ultimately takes oxygen away from fish and other aquatic life, making it difficult for survival. It is estimated that this ban will prevent approximately 1200 tons per year (tpy) of phosphorus from entering Illinois' rivers and streams.

Since most water reclamation plants are not able to remove phosphorus during the biological wastewater treatment process, MWRD officials had been staunch advocates of this legislation. In 2005 the board of commissioners passed a resolution encouraging the state to legislate the reduction of phosphorus in cleaning products. It is estimated that this reduction of phosphorus in household products will save taxpayers across the state about \$330 million infrastructure improvements to remove phosphorus at wastewater treatment facilities.

Board President Terrence O'Brien said that this long-awaited reduction of phosphorus in cleaning products will have a positive impact on waterways throughout the state.

"We've been looking forward to this day for several years. We are proud that Illinois has joined more than half of the other states in the U.S. in reducing the amount of phosphorus in cleaning supplies. This reduction will have a significant impact on the quality of life in Illinois' river and water environment. Several years ago we worked with the Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies (IAWA) and environmental groups such as the Sierra Club to ensure the passage of legislation to reduce the amount of phosphorus in household products. July 1 marks the beginning of healthier waterways throughout our state, and a great day for the aquatic life in Illinois," O'Brien said.

#