



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Calumet Water Reclamation Plant now accepts high strength organics

Companies that produce excess high strength organic materials (HSOM) and want to reduce travel costs and help improve their local water environment can turn to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) Calumet Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) on the far South Side.

Like the MWRD's Stickney WRP, the Calumet WRP, at 400 E. 130th St., Chicago, is now collecting HSOM to improve and stabilize the enhanced biological phosphorus removal (EBPR) process during water treatment.

The liquid, sugary, and starch liquid wastes provide readily biodegradable carbon that serves as food for the phosphate accumulating organisms that work under anaerobic and aerobic conditions in the secondary treatment. These organisms work to remove organic material from wastewater and to recover more phosphorus than normal microorganisms. In only a few months of operations, Calumet WRP has already received more than 1,080,000 gallons of HSOM.

"We are now in business and accepting trucked wastes at our Stickney and Calumet water reclamation plants," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "This is a major victory in protecting our water environment and for local businesses looking to do their part in lowering their carbon footprint while possibly reducing their transportation costs.

Removing phosphorus and other nutrients during the water treatment process is critical in ensuring cleaner waters downstream after it is treated and released back into the water environment. In the case of the Calumet WRP, after the water is cleaned, it is released into the Little Calumet River before flowing downstream to the Cal-Sag Channel, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, Illinois River and eventually the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico. The more phosphorus that can be removed during treatment means the less phosphorus in waterways downstream that could contribute to algae blooms and hypoxic conditions in the Gulf of Mexico.

The MWRD is accepting non-hazardous HSOM containing elevated concentrations of chemical oxygen demand (COD) concentrations of 75,000 mg/L or higher. Examples of acceptable HSOM are food processing, brewery, restaurant and sugary/starchy wastes which are homogenous liquids, or slurries high in organic content that are typically too concentrated to be disposed of by discharge



Trucks travelling significant distances across the Midwest to unload liquid waste from breweries and sugary and starch producers can now deposit that material at the MWRD's Calumet Water Reclamation Plant and improve water downstream by helping increase the recovery of phosphorus from the water stream.

to the sewer system. Spent yeast, grains and hops are examples of wastes that can be delivered to the MWRD. Such trucked materials would not be subject to provisions of the MWRD's User Charge Ordinance.

A sample from each delivery is tested by MWRD environmental specialists. The tanker trucks make a \$250 payment for deliveries of 5,000 gallons and \$50 or \$25 for a 1,000- or 500-gallon delivery, respectively.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the enhanced biological phosphorus removal process," said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita. "We are not only protecting our water environment but becoming pioneers in an emerging field of water treatment and resource recovery and providing a return to taxpayers and the environment."

For more information, contact the MWRD at (312) 751-3044 or at BioP@mwrdd.org. Documents required for enrollment in the program can be downloaded from the District's website at www.mwrdd.org, under Business with Us > Resource Recovery.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for used water treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.