



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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Illinois State Senator Laura Murphy tours MWRD's Stickney Water Reclamation Plant



MWRD Deputy Director of Maintenance and Operations Brett Garelli (far right) and Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations Steve Carmody explain to Illinois State Senator Laura Murphy how the MWRD removes phosphorus during treatment processes at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant.

Illinois State Sen. Laura Murphy (28th District) and her staff recently toured the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant to learn more about the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRD's) role in cleaning 1.4 billion gallons of wastewater each day while recovering resources and preventing waterway pollution.

Senator Murphy toured operations and learned about the rich history of the MWRD. Originally organized as the Sanitary District of Chicago in 1889 under an act of the Illinois General Assembly, the MWRD was created in direct response to the problem of water supply contamination and nuisance conditions of area rivers. One of the MWRD's first acts was to reverse the flow of the Chicago and Calumet River Systems to stop the discharge of sewage to Lake Michigan and instead, discharge it to the Des Plaines River where it could be diluted as it flowed into the Illinois River and eventually the Mississippi River.

More than a century later, the MWRD constructed the world's largest nutrient recovery facility to recover and re-



MWRD Asst. Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations Joe Ford describes the water reclamation process to Sen. Laura Murphy.

use phosphorus and nitrogen to create a high value, environmentally friendly fertilizer that is marketed as Crystal Green. Removing phosphorus from the water and returning it to farmers and other agricultural producers represents a significant transformation from an agency that diluted sewage to treating wastewater to resource recovery.

"It was good to learn about critical water related issues, and my visit to the Stickney Plant to learn about wastewater treatment included a fascinating glimpse into the production of more eco-friendly fertilizer substitute using incoming wastewater," said Senator Murphy.

"We appreciate that Senator Murphy took time to explore the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant and learned more about our endeavors to recover resources while protecting our region's water," said MWRD President Mariyana Spyropoulos. "We are always ready to provide behind the scenes tours so the public and our state leaders can better understand how the MWRD effectively manages tax dollars."

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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