



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

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Legislation Details (With Text)

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RESOLUTION FOR BOARD MEETING OF JULY 6, 2017

RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners affirming the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's support for the Paris Climate Agreement

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) finds that atmospheric concentrations of the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have exceeded pre-industrial levels by nearly 40 percent, 150 percent, and 20 percent, respectively; and

WHEREAS, the IPCC also finds that concentrations of these greenhouse gases exceed the highest concentrations recorded in ice cores during the past 800,000 years; and

WHEREAS, higher concentrations of greenhouse gases allow the atmosphere to trap more heat, thereby increasing global temperatures and contributing to extreme or unusual weather events, including flash floods, tropical storms, heat waves, forest fires, and droughts, and exacerbating public health risks such as heat stress, dehydration, malnutrition, and the spread of vector-borne diseases; and

WHEREAS, reviews of thousands of peer-reviewed scientific studies find a clear scientific consensus that global climate change is real and that human activities-primarily greenhouse gas emissions-are a primary driver; and

WHEREAS, belief in human-induced climate change is shared by numerous scientific societies, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Medical Association, the American Meteorological Society, the American Physical Society, and the Geological Society of America; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established as a policy goal limiting global warming to no more than 2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels in order to avoid the most destructive and disruptive consequences of climate change; and

WHEREAS, at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, representatives from 195 countries adopted by consensus an agreement, commonly known as the Paris Climate Agreement, on December 12, 2015 to limit global temperature increases to no more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama signed an executive order confirming the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement on September 3, 2016, stating that “the growing threat of climate change could define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other challenge”, but that someday people may look back on entering the Paris Climate Agreement as “the moment that we finally decided to save our planet”; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement, the United States established a goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28 percent below its 2005 level in 2025; and

WHEREAS, providing basic protections for citizens and our planet from the worst public health, environmental, and economic effects of climate change is a fundamental act of responsible governance; and

WHEREAS, renewable resources represent the future of employment and economic growth in the United States’ energy sector, demonstrated by the U.S. Department of Energy’s finding in its January 2017 “U.S. Energy and Employment Report” that 475,545 Americans were employed in the solar and wind industries in 2016, compared to 160,119 Americans employed by the coal industry in the same year; and

WHEREAS, the conclusion that human-induced climate change is real is based on thousands of studies using the scientific method of making observations, asking questions, developing hypotheses, gathering information and data, testing hypotheses with replicable and methodologically-sound experiments, analyzing results, communicating results, and developing new hypotheses based on results; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) uses the scientific method and a wide range of scientific consensus to fulfill the MWRD’s mission to protect the health and safety of the public in its service area, protect the quality of the water supply source, improve the quality of water in watercourses in its service area, protect businesses and homes from flood damages, and manage water as a vital resource for its service area; and

WHEREAS, the effects of climate change-particularly increased precipitation and flooding-will directly and adversely impact the residents of Cook County and affect the MWRD’s operations, infrastructure, lands, investments, and employees; and

WHEREAS, the MWRD releases greenhouse gases at its facilities and consumes approximately 600 million kilowatt hours per year of electricity to operate seven treatment plants and 22 pumping stations, and is therefore well-positioned to do its part to mitigate the risk of climate change by reducing its own emissions and electricity usage; and

WHEREAS, the MWRD’s goal is to achieve energy neutrality by 2023 through a combination of innovative technologies and process changes; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of states, cities, counties, universities, and businesses in the United States have publically declared their commitment to support the Paris Climate Agreement despite the federal government’s intention to withdraw; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water District of Greater Chicago, on behalf of ourselves and staff, do hereby pledge support for the Paris Climate Agreement and resolve to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 28 percent below the MWRD’s 2005 level in or before 2025, and to continually pursue new projects and policies that will help protect our region from the worst effects of climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent record of proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

Dated: July 6, 2017

Approved: MARIYANA T. SPYROPOULOS, President; BARBARA J. MCGOWAN, Vice President; FRANK AVILA, Chairman, Committee on Finance; TIMOTHY BRADFORD; MARTIN J. DURKAN; JOSINA MORITA; DEBRA SHORE; KARI K. STEELE; DAVID J. WALSH; Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Approved as to Form and Legality: Susan T. Morakalis, Acting General Counsel