



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

File #: 21-0502, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION FOR BOARD MEETING OF JUNE 3, 2021

RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners recognizing water and sanitation as basic human rights and that water shall remain in the public trust

WHEREAS, water is a necessary component of human life and all known living beings; and

WHEREAS, clean drinking water and sanitation is a human right essential for the full enjoyment of life and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, approximately 0.5% of the Earth's water is available freshwater, which is often compromised by pollution and excessive withdrawal from lakes, rivers, aquifers, and other water bodies that put those watersheds at risk; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations estimates that by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world's population could be living under water-stressed conditions; and

WHEREAS, on December 7, 2020, a water futures market was launched for California water, creating the world's first water futures market that allows traders, banks, hedge funds, and others to bet on future water prices and availability; and

WHEREAS, treating water as another tradable commodity, like gold and oil, benefits some but excludes other segments of society such as disproportionately impacted communities, small-scale farmers, and others without the financial ability to access such markets; and

WHEREAS, water futures markets represent the financialization of life itself and fail to distinguish the value of water beyond finances, such as between usage for non-essential swimming pools and essential sanitation; and

WHEREAS, privately-owned water utilities are not necessarily more cost-effective, nor are they saving residents money compared with publicly-owned utilities, as privately-owned water utility customers pay an average of 59% more for drinking water services and 63% more for sewer services, according to Food & Water Watch; and

WHEREAS, people deserve a voice and the opportunity to determine their water and sewage treatment services; and

WHEREAS, additionally, according to the United Nations, access to a robust and hygienic water supply can save approximately 360,000 infants worldwide from death each year. Currently, it is estimated that one out of every three people, approximately 2.2 billion people, live with contaminated drinking water, often containing feces and other harmful pollutants; and

WHEREAS, equal access to clean water is affected by many factors including climate, financial stability, and proximity to a water source; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, do hereby oppose the commodification of water because the value of water is immeasurable, as water shapes every component of our lives. Commodifying water improperly leads to neglect of this valuable resource, which ultimately contributes to the degradation of the environment and is a dominant element in global illness and famine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, do hereby recognize water and sanitation as basic human rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, do hereby affirm that the water of the Great Lakes, including the source of our drinking water in the Chicago metropolitan area, shall remain in the public trust for the people of the Great Lakes region; 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: June 3, 2021