

## **Statement from MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore 1.5.2012**

First of all, I want to acknowledge the dedication and deliberation of my colleagues on the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. Due to the insistence of my colleagues, a public meeting was held to notify nearby residents about this plan, a wildlife survey was conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, a noise study was expanded to include the noise levels from the proposed range in neighboring natural areas, and many members of the public – including residents of the Southeast side – have been given an opportunity to comment on the plan.

Second, let me say that I recognize the need for an outdoor firing range for police officer training and fully support the Chicago Police Department's desire to build a state-of-the-art range for training. However, the proposed location for the range conflicts with several initiatives and values supported by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and I urge that an alternate location be considered.

The proposed site is next to Whitford Pond, lies just across the Calumet River from Hegewisch Marsh where the city plans to build the Ford Calumet Environmental Center, and is within the Millennium Reserve: Calumet Core Initiative, all of which will provide educational and recreational experiences with nature to thousands of families. Gunfire from the site will be near and audible to many visitors of these outdoor treasures.

Furthermore, we now know that 2011 was the second-wettest year on record in the Chicago region. 2008 was the wettest on record. I believe we are seeing a new kind of storm that requires every resource at our disposal to address future rain events. The 33 acres of the proposed firing range could be converted to a wetland, capturing 11 million gallons of stormwater and providing additional benefits by improving air quality, taking up nutrients, sequestering carbon, enhancing habitat, and offering recreational opportunities, all in keeping with the District's mission of managing stormwater and improving the environment.

Surrounding communities are overburdened with acres of city and industrial pollution and are counting on these visionary projects for improved quality of environment and life. An outdoor firing range at this location would severely compromise these projects.

If this firing range is to be built as proposed, then I would ask my colleagues to join me in requesting that the Police Department include additional berms or barriers to reduce or eliminate the sound of gunfire that will be audible in Hegewisch Marsh. I am sure that the Water Reclamation District would be happy to supply biosolids at no cost to assist with this effort to mitigate the impact on people and wildlife nearby and our engineering department would be happy to assist with design.

Finally, I want to make it very clear that all of us on this board bring passion and sincerity to our work. We make our decisions based on our values, our beliefs, our responsibility to people of Cook County, and our best understanding of the mission of this agency. We differ sometimes in those decisions, but we respect each other and prize the process. I am proud of that.

In my opinion, the firing range is a worthy project but the proposed site is the wrong place for it and I will oppose it.

Thank you.

Debra Shore  
Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater  
Chicago