

Department of Water Management 2015 Budget Hearing

Chairman Austin, members of the Committee on Budget and Government Operations and members of the City Council, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present to you the Department of Water Management's (DWM) 2015 Budget.

In 2012, under the leadership of Mayor Rahm Emanuel, DWM embarked on its 10-year capital program that includes:

- The replacement of 880 miles of water main
- Four designs to convert steam pumping stations to electric
- The conversion of three of the four pumping stations from steam to electric
- The installation of more than 200,000 meters

In addition, the program includes:

- The replacement of 250 miles of sewer main
- The lining of 470 miles of sewer
- The lining of 140,000 sewer structures

This year, three years into the plan, DWM is, has been or will be in each neighborhood and as a result has met or exceeded its annual goals. I am pleased to report that our 10 year plan is more than one third of the way complete. Utilizing concentrated and systematic business process changes, from labor to financing and everything in between, DWM is on track to achieve and complete its 10-Year Capital Program on time and within budget.

Despite the weather challenges we faced early in the year, and let me thank you again because you and your staff were our eyes and ears on the front line, we received and addressed frozen services and complaints of "no water" unlike any other year in recent history. Despite the colder than average winter, DWM has been able to remain on task and meet our 2014 goals.

In 2011, I committed to positioning the Department in a way that gets us back on track with replacing infrastructure at the original pace of water and sewer main installation; conserving water for future growth; upgrading and maintaining our facilities; and creating more jobs. I am proud to state that this year, the Department is on pace to install 85 miles of water main, replace 21 miles of sewer main, line 55 miles of sewers, line 14,000 sewer structures, complete the 10 acre roof at the Jardine Water Purification Plant, and continue to convert the Springfield Avenue Pumping Station from steam to electric power. In addition, we will install more than 15,000 free water meters as part of the successful MeterSave Program. I could not be prouder of the women and men that work for the Department that help each day to make our plans a reality.

Department of Water Management
2015 Budget Hearing

We have hired and promoted more than 700 employees in the last three years alone. We are ensuring proper training and professional development while continuing to provide uninterrupted, fully compliant and exceptional services to our customers. Incorporating facility and security assessments, working with the Unions to change work rules, executing competitive contracts, coordinating with other agencies, utilities and departments, continually training employees to ensure the safe execution of this plan, incorporating and optimizing timely, cost-effective, reliable and sustainable performance improvements in all aspects of our operations allow us to continue to be resilient, resourceful and reliable in the water service we provide to the residents of Chicago as well as the communities we serve.

Every day, we strive to protect the public health in the most environmentally and fiscally responsible manner by delivering a sufficient supply of exceptional quality water while efficiently managing waste and storm-water. We are committed to providing the highest level of professional services to meet our customers' needs now and for future generations.

DWM, through our operations at the Jardine and South Water Purification Plants, the largest conventional treatment plants in the world, purifies on average about 800 million gallons of water each day. The Department also operates 12 pumping stations that distribute water through more than 4,400 miles of water mains. On the sewer side, the department is responsible for transmission of waste water through more than 4,600 miles of sewer mains to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD).

We provide water service to 2.7 million customers in Chicago and an additional 2.67 million customers in 125 surrounding suburbs. On a daily basis, 5.37 million customers - 42 percent of the state of Illinois - depend on our infrastructure for clean, safe drinking water.

We are addressing our aging sewer system with the goal of flood reduction in our neighborhoods. We are replacing 21 miles of sewers and lining 55 miles of sewer structures and sewer mains. Lining sewers and their structures extends the life by approximately 50 years. Sewer lining is less disruptive to traffic, businesses, bicyclers and pedestrians. Ultimately, it is about making sure waste and storm water enter the sewers and not our businesses and homes.

When you have over 5 million people depending on you for something as vital as water service, it is essential to make sure that everything is well maintained, properly operating and, when necessary, replacements are made in a timely manner. That means anticipating and addressing issues before they become problems. To do this we must continue our aggressive infrastructure renewal and capital improvements while maintaining and improving daily operations and repairs. We must stay current with the latest technologies and best business practices while being mindful of the current economy and environment.

**Department of Water Management
2015 Budget Hearing**

We have a clear mandate from the Mayor and City Council to rebuild our aging infrastructure, but we cannot do this important work alone. We continue to coordinate with other departments, your ward offices, utilities and agencies, to identify opportunities for collaboration. We are utilizing best practices and technology to deliver high quality construction in an efficient and safe manner.

Our goal remains the same: reform where we can; cut or amend our approach where we must; and invest where it matters to provide greater opportunities and better services. All of our investments depend on protecting our communities and ensuring a well-run system that continues to provide quality drinking water while transmitting waste and storm water to MWRD. This year, we've completed more work than ever before in the entire history of the Department. This was achieved by improving processes and using technology to change the way we do business.

Operationally, our backlog has been reduced as a result of more quickly closing open work orders through hard work in the field. Holding crews accountable and doing the work efficiently while maintaining a safe workforce are key to our improved productivity.

The MeterSave Program has proven to save water and save our customers money. The only way to know how much water someone is using is to meter it. We must be good stewards of this essential natural resource.

You are our ambassadors of the MeterSave Program, touting the benefits of having a meter installed in single-family and two-flat non-metered homes. Word of mouth is our best marketing tool and we truly appreciate you and your staff's assistance in this effort as the Department continues to promote installation of water meters for all properties. This year, we exceeded our goal to install 15,000 meters.

Customers interested in obtaining more information and signing up for MeterSave can do so in 3 ways: a) Call 3-1-1; b) visit our website at www.metersave.org where you can get information, sign-up and schedule the installation; and c) Our customer service number at 312-744-4H20.

Finally, last week, we were awarded the Platinum Award for Utility Excellence from the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA). AMWA is comprised of large water utilities such as the Chicago DWM, so to earn such a prestigious award from our peers speaks volumes. DWM is resilient and has the resources that make our Utility stand out.

**Department of Water Management
2015 Budget Hearing**

In 2015 our targets will include:

- 90 miles of water main installation
- 15,000 MeterSave meter installations
- 22 miles of sewer main installation
- 50 miles of sewer main lining
- 14,000 structure linings

As Commissioner of the Department of Water Management, I pledge to continue to work with all of you to look at your water and sewer related needs in your wards so that we can make the improvements necessary to maintain our quality of life. I am as committed as ever to be accessible and to improve communications between our department and you and your staff.

The people of Chicago deserve this and more. Thank you.

