

**Department of Water Management
2017 Budget Hearing
Remarks of Barrett B. Murphy, Commissioner
October 28, 2016**

Good morning Chairman Austin, Vice Chairman Ervin, 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 2017 Budget proposal for the Department of Water Management (DWM).

Our mission is to ensure the health of the public in the most environmentally and fiscally responsible manner by delivering a sufficient supply of quality water and efficiently managing waste and stormwater.

Through our operations at the Jardine and Sawyer Water Purification Plants – the two largest conventional treatment plants in the world – DWM purifies, on average, about 800 million gallons of water a day. We also operate 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 wastewater through more than 4,400 miles of sewer mains to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

We provide purified water to more than 2.7 million customers in Chicago and 2.67 million customers in 125 surrounding suburbs. On a daily basis, more than 5.3 million customers, or 42 percent of the Illinois population, depend on our infrastructure for clean, safe drinking water.

Since my confirmation in May, we have continued to meet our goals of Mayor Emanuel's 10-year capital program, now almost at the halfway mark. In June, we hosted ACE16 - the American Water Works Association's Annual Conference and Exposition - where more than 14,000 water professionals gathered to learn from one another. At the conference I explained why every time they went from point A to point B, whether to dinner, the airport or sightseeing, their route might be slowed due to our construction. We have been in every ward over the last five years either replacing water mains or sewer mains or lining structures and sewers. Our crews are hard at work to upgrade our aging infrastructure to ensure we won't have to be back again for decades. Further, every dollar spent improving our infrastructure puts people to work, which is a tangible benefit to our residents and our communities.

Today, we continue to actively move closer to reaching our goals established in 2011, which include:

- Replacing 880 miles of water mains;
- Replacing 250 miles of sewer mains;

Department of Water Management
2017 Budget Hearing
Remarks of Barrett B. Murphy, Commissioner
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- Lining more than 470 miles of sewers and 140,000 sewer structures to extend their useful life; and
- Converting three pumping stations from steam to electric power.

I could not be prouder of the men and women who work for the Department, helping each day to make our plans a reality. In the last four years we have hired or promoted more than 700 employees. Throughout the Department, we ensure proper training and professional development to ensure the safe and efficient execution of the capital plan.

The ability to provide quality, cost-effective and reliable services requires a multi-faceted administrative effort. That includes: incorporating facility assessments; working with the various labor unions to achieve work rule compliance; executing competitive contracts; coordinating with other agencies, utilities and departments; and implementing traditional and alternative funding to avoid overburdening future generations.

We constantly coordinate with other departments, with your ward staff, utilities and other agencies to identify opportunities for collaboration. The use of the latest mapping and scheduling technology, as well as monthly coordination meetings between departments and utilities, has contributed to an accelerated and more efficient and cost-effective program.

Earlier this year, the American Society of Civil Engineers highlighted our Department as a success story, saying that, **"In 2014, investments by ... the CDWM generated nearly 20,000 total jobs, including more than 10,000 direct construction, water, and sewage jobs... increased regional economic output by almost \$2 billion over the year."**

Infrastructure investments are a win-win for Chicago and Illinois. The investments improve environmental quality for households and businesses; provide middle-class employment for construction workers & the employees of water facilities; preserves our most precious resource; and ripples into other sectors of the economy.

We continue to improve operations and maintenance, which includes addressing emergency repairs and other calls for service. Work orders are being completed and closed more quickly, resulting in a decreased backlog. In the areas of leaks and breaks, no water, water in basement, catch basin repair requests and sewer cave-ins, our response times are down as well, as are the number of open service requests. This increased productivity is due to the hard work of our men and women in the field, the reduction in water main breaks and collapsed sewers due to capital work, and by holding crews accountable to do their work efficiently and safely.

**Department of Water Management
2017 Budget Hearing
Remarks of Barrett B. Murphy, Commissioner
October 28, 2016**

The MeterSave Program is an important program that saves water, and at the same time, it saves our customers money. This year, we will exceed our installation goal of 15,000 meters. The only way to know exactly how much water someone is using is to measure it. With more awareness of water use, we will all become better stewards of this great natural resource. Word of mouth is our best marketing tool and we truly appreciate you and your staff's assistance in this effort as we continue to promote installation of water meters for all properties.

In 2017, our administrative goals remain the same: reform and improve where we can; cut, or amend our approach where we must; and invest where it matters. Our construction targets for 2017 will include:

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

At the end of our 10-year program, DWM will have invested nearly \$7 billion in the improvement of our water and sewer systems. As Commissioner of the Department of Water Management, I pledge to continue to work with each of you as we look at the service needs in your wards to make the improvements necessary to maintain and improve quality of life. I am committed to remaining accessible and improving communications between our Department and you and your staff.

We have accomplished much in 2016, and I look forward to continuing to deliver the best possible services to the residents of Chicago next year. Together, we will ensure that Chicago's water and sewer system provides high-quality service to all of our customers.

Thank you.