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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MWRD Candidates Demand Immediate Action to Secure Abandoned Harvey Properties

HARVEY, IL — The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago purchased a block of homes in Harvey IL in 2023 for a proposed stormwater retention project. Currently, the abandoned residential properties remain unsecured. It is unclear from the location and publicly available information what specific flooding problem the project will address, or when construction will begin. In the meantime, these properties have been allowed to deteriorate, creating serious safety concerns for children and nearby residents.

ABC7 Chicago reported a house fire Tuesday morning on Myrtle Avenue near 153rd Street, in the area residents identify as the MWRD-owned block. A local resident also reported that

children who were waiting for a school bus that morning were exposed to adults engaging in sexual activity inside the abandoned houses. Residents say a Harvey Alderwoman Colby Chapman has repeatedly asked that the buildings be boarded, but the city has instead continued providing future demolition dates.

“MWRD must immediately secure and properly board every property it owns on this block. MWRD has the resources and the responsibility to protect residents while it determines the future of these sites. The district must also publicly explain the purpose, cost, timeline and intended beneficiaries of this proposed retention project.” said Republican MWRD candidate Michelle Pennington.

“Allowing publicly owned properties to become dangerous and deteriorate is unacceptable.” Republican Candidate Timothy Rueckert added, “The financially struggling City of Harvey should not be expected to pay for the care and security of MWRD property. Fiscal responsibility begins with maintaining the assets taxpayers have already purchased.”

“Public records indicate Harvey residents are the lowest priority in this project. MWRD has delayed the main project from a summer 2025 construction date, to 2026, and now to 2027 pending IDOT coordination, precisely what remains unresolved with IDOT? The unfunny math shows estimated construction costs moved from approximately \$9.85 million to \$13 million - an increase of 32%. Published benefit figures have decreased from 690 structures, dropping to 209; a decrease benefit of nearly 70%. Final curious thought--- the fire is 2 days before a board meeting for a demo contract? What's up MWRD?" asked Republican MWRD candidate Jill Shestokas.

"MWRD has operated unchecked under Democrat control for far too long, and this neglect is another example of why accountability and new leadership are needed," said Pennington.

The 2026 midterm election takes place on Tuesday, November 3.

Vote 3 for MWRD—Michelle Pennington, Timothy E. Rueckert and Jill B. Shestokas

Elect three new commissioners who will challenge mismanagement, demand transparency and ensure that MWRD protects the communities affected by its decisions.

Visit www.michelleforcleanwater.com for more information