



Media Release

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### **New Water Commission Membership Finalized**

Water history has been made in the southwest suburbs. Six southwest suburban communities have joined together to form a regional water commission to bring a sustainable, reliable, and high-quality Lake Michigan water supply to their residents by 2030. Commission members will include the Cities of Joliet and Crest Hill, and the Villages of Channahon, Minooka, Romeoville, and Shorewood.

"This is just the start of what will be a great collaboration between communities," Mayor Bob O'Dekirk of Joliet said. "It has taken a tremendous effort to get here, and I am thankful for the hard work by our staff and partners. We have taken another step forward along the path to securing the vitality of our region for the future."

The first community to approve the Preliminary Agreement for the formation of the regional water commission was the City of Crest Hill on January 17, 2022. "Through this commission, Crest Hill will reap the benefits of Chicago's state-of-the-art Eugene Sawyer Water Purification Plant," noted Mayor Ray Soliman. "This system purifies and distributes over 1 billion gallons of high-quality drinking water each day."

Romeoville became the sixth and final charter member when its Village Board approved the Preliminary Agreement to form the new water commission. "We are excited about this partnership that will benefit all of the participating municipalities," said Mayor John Noak. "This was the most cost-efficient alternative for our residents, customers and businesses to secure a sustainable quality water source. Our community looks forward to working with all the partners as we move to the next phase of this project."

According to the Illinois State Water Survey, the deep groundwater aquifer that serves this region will no longer be able to meet water needs as early as 2030. These communities have been working individually and collaboratively over the past several years to understand and evaluate the best solutions to the water crisis. "Our Board of Trustees did not come to this decision lightly," reported Channahon Mayor Missey Moorman-Schumacher. "Our research led us to select Lake Michigan water through a regional commission as the best alternative to ensure a reliable source of water for generations to come."

Under the agreement signed by the municipalities, they will begin working together to establish the regional water commission. The formal creation of the commission is expected to occur by April 2023.

Shorewood Mayor Clarence C. DeBold stated, "I appreciate all the efforts over the years that have gone into making this commission a reality. I am looking forward to moving into the next phase of establishing the policies and regulations for the commission."

Members must individually secure a Lake Michigan Water Allocation permit from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Joliet and Shorewood already have these permits in place. Minooka President Ric Offerman said, "We are working aggressively to secure our allocation permit and look forward to working with the member communities to establish the commission."

Working together will allow communities to maximize economies of scale and provide a more cost-effective solution for area residents. The new water source is scheduled to begin serving each of the member communities by 2030.

In December 2021, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker signed Senate Bill 280, which enabled the creation of the new regional water commission. This legislation allows municipalities to jointly address the region's looming water shortage.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to learn more about the regional water commission by visiting their community's website.