

# METRO WATER DISTRICT SOAKS TAXPAYERS WITH BIG SALARIES AND HEFTY PAY RAISES

JOINT BGA / CHICAGO NEWS COOPERATIVE INVESTIGATION FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Chicago** - The Better Government Association (BGA) is proud to announce the launch of an exciting new investigative partnership with the Chicago News Cooperative. In Friday's edition of the New York Times, BGA Chief Investigator Patrick Rehkamp and Dan Mihalopoulos of the Chicago News Cooperative present a startling look at the payroll of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD). In the midst of the worst economic crisis in decades, we found that this seldom-scrutinized government taxing body has doubled the number of employees making over \$100,000 a year and tripled the number of employees making over \$200,000 a year. The results of this joint BGA/Chicago News Coop investigation will leave taxpayers with a thirst for better and more frugal government. With a \$1.7 billion budget the MWRD is responsible for the health and safety of our city's water supply but taxpayers may feel drenched when they learn that eight of the District's lawyers have higher salaries than the top lawyer for the City of Chicago. MAKE SURE YOU GET THE NEW YORK TIMES FRIDAY TO READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Mihalopoulos and Rehkamp examined budget and payroll records, pouring over documents that tell the story of a government entity apparently insensitive to the economic reality facing taxpayers today. Our story discloses that MWRD is currently paying 16 employees more than Mayor Daley makes. The District's top lawyer makes 32% more than the head of the City of Chicago's legal department. And the human resources director at MWRD is paid a whopping \$204,000 a year--over \$50,000 more than the salary of Chicago's HR commissioner. What is equally disturbing is that in the last five years, nobody at MWRD has been asked to take a pay cut while city workers and state employees have faced layoffs and unpaid furloughs.

## **BGA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANDY SHAW CALLS FOR ACTION**

Executive Director of the Better Government Association Andy Shaw said, "This is what happens when a unit of government flies below the radar. And this partnership between the BGA and the News Cooperative will play a critical role in bringing this kind of story to the electorate. There is no reasonable explanation for why this taxing body needs to pay exorbitant salaries to so many employees. It's time for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to get real with taxpayers and stop spending our money on bloated salaries. The Better Government Association is calling on the MWRD to enact an immediate pay freeze and to consider how they can cut their payroll to offer a tax rebate to the citizens of Chicagoland."

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BGA AND HELP US FIGHT FOR HONEST AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT!**

How the Better Government Association fights for YOU!

The BGA has been fighting for the citizens of Chicago, Cook County and Illinois since 1923. We investigate government waste and corruption to expose mismanagement, patronage and nepotism. We propose solutions and reforms that will make government work for the people it represents. Please help us by joining the BGA and adding your voice to the chorus of citizens demanding good government.

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