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PRESS RELEASE

COMMUNITIES, ELECTED OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE NEW REGIONAL WATER COMMISSION

JOLIET, IL – On August 18, 2022, elected officials gathered to reveal the identity of a new regional water commission. Calling themselves the Grand Prairie Water Commission, six southwestern suburban municipalities have teamed up to establish a joint solution to a regional water problem.

The event was kicked off by Hugh O'Hara, coordinator for the water commission, who has worked with area officials to facilitate this effort. He noted, "This has been a long time coming, and this step forward is a visible sign of the hard work these communities have put in." He added, "Having a sustainable, high quality water source is essential to our region's future success, and I applaud these communities for understanding the stakes and working together for the best solution."

Next, elected officials who have helped make this commission possible, took a turn at the podium.

"The importance and magnitude of this project cannot be overstated; this requires collaboration of municipalities and at every level of government," said Congresswoman Lauren Underwood. "This project is a critical first step in transitioning to a Lake Michigan water source because clean safe and reliable drinking water is a human right."

Congressman Bill Foster noted, "It's not often you see local governments come together like this, but when they do it is very important. I'm grateful that the federal and state governments have rewarded that collaboration. This makes government work the way it should for the people we represent." He added, "I'm proud to be advocating for over \$3 million in funding to support the regional water commission's project to tap into Lake Michigan as its primary source of drinking water, which will help ensure clean, reliable, and sustainable drinking water for this region for decades to come."

"I have lived in this area my entire life, and it is a privilege to be a part of this effort to secure a life sustaining resource for our residents," stated Representative Larry Walsh, Jr., who sponsored the new state statute allowing municipalities to join together to create regional water commissions. "The work we are doing today will set this region up for success for decades to come."

Shorewood Mayor Clarence "CC" DeBold chairs the leadership group that is working toward formalizing the new Commission. After revealing the name and logo for the Commission, he stated, "I have to thank the staff at all the communities who have worked so hard to make this happen. They have a huge task to accomplish in a short time and I have confidence in their success." The vision of the Commission's founding municipalities is for the Commission to be recognized as a leader in providing

sustainable, reliable, and high-quality water in an innovative, collaborative, fiscally responsible and efficient manner for our communities.

Other dignitaries in attendance included Senators Meg Loughran Cappel, and Eric Matteson, former State Senator John Connor, Representatives Dee Avelar and David Welter, Mayors John Noak, Bob O'Dekirk, Missey Moorman Schumacher, and Raymond Soliman and Minooka Trustee Barry Thompson.

For the past several years communities in the region have been evaluating alternative water sources due to water quantity and water quality challenges with their existing water sources. Lake Michigan water purchased from the City of Chicago was selected as the most sustainable and reliable water source to meet water needs and support continued growth and development in the region. The six member municipalities of the Commission include Channahon, Crest Hill, Joliet, Minooka, Romeoville, and Shorewood. A website has been established to provide information about the Commission. To learn more, please visit www.GPWC-IL.org

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