

IVI-IPO 2010 WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE 7-16-10 PARTY: Green

NAME: John "Jack" Ailey

VOTING ADDRESS: 2416 S. Ridgeway, Chicago, IL 60623

HOME PHONE: 773-521-9743 BUSINESS PHONE: 312-802-9004

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: Committee to Elect Greens to the MWRD, PO Box 08200, Chicago, IL 60608

CAMPAIGN PHONE: 312-802-9004 FAX: 773-521-9743

EMAIL: greens4mwrld@comcast.net WEBSITE: greens4mwrld.org

CAMPAIGN MANAGER: self

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: ~1600 NUMBER REQUIRED: 832

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates. **Green Party Committeeperson, 22nd Ward; Treasurer, Illinois Green Party; Treasurer, Cook County Green Party (all current)**

B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate. 2008, also candidate for the MWRD

C) What is your primary occupation? **Retired electrician. Still part time electrical work and teaching at Prairie State College**

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years. **Most of my activity has been in building the Illinois Green Party. Associated with this has been work for environmental justice in the Pilsen neighborhood with the Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization. Currently I am involved in the Chicago Clean Power Coalition working for Joe Moore's Clean Power Ordinance. I have also lobbied and demonstrated for Single Payer Health Insurance. I have participated in and organized for immigrants rights and against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have also worked for and demonstrated for disability rights.**

E) What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek? **My industrial experience as an electrician will help me understand the processes and controls used at the MWRD facilities. I have also seen good and bad examples of how repairs are organized. Since 2008 I have been reading various books concerning water issues and sewage treatment issues. Particularly useful was *The Big Necessity* by Rose George.**

F) What candidates have you supported in past elections? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign. **As a Green Party activist I have supported many Green Party candidates 2000-2010. I petitioned for Ralph Nader in 2000 and campaigned for him. I petitioned for Julie Samuels for state rep in 2002 and 2004 and helped the campaign. I petitioned for our statewide slate in 2006 and for Dorian Breuer for state senate in 2006. I also campaigned for them. In 2008 I was a candidate for the MWRD and I worked on other Green Party campaigns, particularly Omar Lopez for Congress. This season I have petitioned for our statewide slate and for the three of us for the MWRD. I have helped Rich Whitney's campaign, LeAlan Jones' campaign, and our own.**

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far. **The various levels of the Green Party have endorsed me.**

H) As concisely as possible, please state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally? **As a Green Party candidate I am not accepting contributions from corporations. I seek to represent the interests of the ordinary residents of Cook County, not those of corporations nor of entrenched political machines. I look to environmental organizations such as Friends of the Chicago River, Sierra Club, and Openlands for proposals for what the MWRD needs to do that it is not doing. First among this is to treat for bacteria at all MWRD treatment**

plants. Even the Illinois EPA thinks they should do that. The sludge from the MWRD plants is not safe to spread on farmland. The MWRD needs to institute tertiary treatment of its sludge before it would be safe for this use. The MWRD needs to start planning how it is going to achieve "ecological separation" between the Great Lakes watershed and the Mississippi River watershed. The MWRD needs to be much more active in promoting methods of keeping storm water out of the sewer system.

I) What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date? **We are aiming for \$10,000 this time. So far we have \$800.**

J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list? **Our campaign staff is mainly the three of us candidates. We do have 15 and sometimes more volunteers for specific projects.**

IVI-IPO 2010 WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 2

1. Should Commissioners be elected at-large or by district? **I see negatives to both systems. Running at large puts a very high barrier for us independent candidates. Running by district might not give much better results as I would expect them to be gerrymandered. Really I would like to see a system of proportional representation on a district wide. The issues of the MWRD are countywide, not really different in different areas of the county. If we had a ranked choice voting system (STV), that would get a more representative board.**

2. Should cumulative voting be used to elect commissioners? **Cumulative voting would be better that what we have now, but I think the fairest would be an STV system.**

3. Do you have a business relationship with or financial interest in any entity doing business with the MWRD or other governmental bodies in Cook County? **No except part time teaching at Prairie State College.**

4. Will you accept or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers, employees or outside contractors? **I have not have not had any offers or any donations from any of these categories. Since we don't accept any contributions from businesses, the suppliers and contractors are ruled out for us greens. I would accept contributions from rank and file MWRD employees, but I have not solicited them.**

5. a. In what circumstances should the District contract for outside professional services? **In general I oppose contracting out. I recognize that in certain cases, the in house staff doesn't have the expertise or the time to adequately plan a particular project. But I would try to cut back on contracting out. A lot of times my observation is that it is a false economy to contract out.**

b. In what circumstances should competitive bidding for contracts be required? **All sizable contracts have to put out for bid. I also have experience with competitive bidding just holding up needed repairs when I worked at the CTA. Some common sense needs to be applied.**

c. Please comment on any existing abuses. **I still don't have hard data on this. From the *Tribune* articles it appears that the "black box" was a bad mistake and a waste of money. The *Tribune* seems to think this contract was the result of cronyism.**

6. Do you support a ban on hiring, firing and promotion based on political considerations for non policy making positions? **Yes, of course.**

7. Will you support public postings of all permanent and temporary jobs at the District? **Yes.**

8. Do you support Affirmative Action? **Yes.**

9. Do you favor permitting MWRD employees to hold other public sector employment concurrently? **Special permission should be needed to do this. For example, when I worked for the CTA, I had to get special permission to teach one class down at Prairie State College. In individual cases I think it is appropriate to allow a full time MWRD employee to have a part time job at some other public sector agency, but the individual circumstances would have to be examined.**

10. Do you favor permitting MWRD employees to have outside employment or contracts with entities which do business with the district? **There should be a general prohibition, with the possibility of appeal due to extraordinary circumstances.**

11. Is the District in good financial condition? Please comment on both expenditures and sources of revenues. **The MWRD says it is balancing its budget and as far as I can see now, it is. I am totally against the MWRD spending money on lawyers to fight the IEPA's proposed rule for the CAWS. I also think it is a waste to study whether people are currently getting sick from contact with water in the river or the canals. We know people can get sick from this. We just need to remove the known hazards. I don't really agree that the best way to fund the MWRD is through property taxes. I would like to move towards some sort of user fee which would provide an incentive for people to conserve water and keep storm water out of the sewer system.**

12. Under what circumstances would you support sale of MWRD property? **The sale should promote a social or environmental goal. The MWRD needs to keep a good bit of riverfront property for use for transition to more decentralized sewage treatment operations. Land should not be sold if it is going to become impermeable surface and add to storm runoff.**

13. a. What should be the MWRD's role in policy on lakefront, riverfront and canal development? **I don't believe the MWRD has much role in lakefront development except that it controls discharges into the lake at three points. The riverfront needs to be transitioned back to a more natural condition. We need some constructed wetlands to help control flooding and also for cleaning the water. The big question is to come up with a plan to achieve "ecological separation" between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River, as I mentioned before.**

b. What responsibility should it have for planning or monitoring such development? **Since the MWRD has overall responsibility for stormwater management, it needs to have parameters for development along the CAWS.**

14. a. Do you support creation of a regional riverfront trail? **Yes.**

b. Why or why not? **This would provide another natural area in the urban setting for all residents to enjoy and learn from.**

c. What role, if any, should the MWRD have in such a project? **I would think the MWRD should take the lead in developing such a plan.**

15. Do you support the existing agreement between the district and the property owners on the North Branch of the Chicago River? **I still haven't found out what that is.**

16. Do you think the MWRD should be required to kill bacteria from human sewage that is pumped into the Chicago and Calumet river systems as part of sewage effluent? **Yes, absolutely, see my answers above.**

17. Do you think the MWRD should be required to remove phosphorus and nitrogen from the effluent it releases into our waterways? **Yes, effluent from the MWRD is partially responsible for the dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico.**

18. a. Are you for or against using green technologies to manage storm water? **Of course, I am for green technologies.**

b. Do you think storm water should be preserved and protected? **We need to do a lot more to keep storm water out of the sewer system. We need to let it soak into the ground. We need to use it for watering lawns and gardens. We could use it to flush our toilets.**

c. Please explain your answers. **The fact that most of Cook County has a combined sewer system is a big problem. Storm water needs treatment, but not the same treatment as sewage. The MWRD has spent and is spending a huge amount of money on temporary storage of storm water. All of that money has not eliminated combined sewer overflows and the MWRD admits it will not. We need a much bigger effort to keep storm water out of the sewer system.**

19. What can the MWRD do to exceed minimal requirements for permitting under the Clean Water Act? **The IEPA thinks the MWRD should be treating for bacteria and so do I. Next on the list is nitrogen and phosphorus as you mentioned. But really there are a whole range of contaminants that need to be removed from the effluent before it is released back into the CAWS. There are sewage treatment plants in this country which treat for all contaminants and release water that is of drinking water quality. This should be our goal in Cook County also.**

20. What can be done to alleviate flooding in Chicago and the suburbs which persists despite the construction of TARP? **As was mentioned above there are a number of green technologies which could do a lot to alleviate this. The MWRD should offer incentives to get rain barrels installed. Green roofs can help some. The storm water management ordinance that the district is implementing could be strengthened to require smaller developments to have storm water retention areas. Bigger buildings could install cisterns to collect rain water. Permeable paving could be installed in parking lots. Where the yard is big enough, a rain garden could be installed.**