



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL KEYNOTES GLOBAL WATER TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE IN TEL AVIV**

*Introduces Current as Chicago's Innovation Platform for Solutions to Global Water Needs*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today delivered the opening keynote address at the 2017 Water Technology and Environmental Control Exhibition & Conference (WATEC) in Tel Aviv. During the address, he called for global cities to find innovative solutions to water scarcity and announced Chicago-based Current's new programs to drive advanced water research and technology innovations. The Mayor also highlighted the City of Chicago's commitment to innovation, international partnerships, and economic development as strategies to address global water needs.

"Water scarcity is a large-scale challenge today that will evolve into a global crisis without a coordinated, concerted effort," Mayor Emanuel said. "We need global cities working to find technology solutions because a rising tide of innovation lifts all people and all nations."

Mayor Emanuel announced new partnerships between Chicago and Israel that will create research and commercial opportunities. The agreements between Current, Chicago's water research and technology innovation platform, and The Technion Israel Institute for Technology, Mekorot (Israel's national water utility) and NewTech (Israel's national clean tech program) deepen existing ties between Chicago and Israel to advance next-generation water innovations. In addition the Chicago Department of Water Management (CDWM) and Mekorot signed a Memorandum of Understanding for information sharing and partnership on new water strategies.

"With the world's largest water treatment plants and a history of water engineering breakthroughs, Chicago is uniquely positioned to lead the world in water tech innovation," Steve Frenkel, Executive Director of Current said. "Through Current we're leveraging the global reach of Chicago's research, technology and economic might to solve the world's toughest water problems."

Current, a non-profit based in Chicago, this week unveiled three core programs to deliver advanced water research and market-driven innovations to bridge gaps in the water solutions ecosystem. These programs form a powerful technology-to-market platform based on a new global center of excellence in water research and technology validation and commercialization programs.

First, the Current Research program amplifies advanced research through the collective capabilities Argonne National Laboratory, CDWM, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), Northwestern University, University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois.

“We are delighted to join with our other founding members of Current in a consortium that will advance Chicago and its partners as leaders in water research, development, and commercialization for the betterment of mankind and the environment,” Jay Walsh, Vice President for Research at Northwestern University said.

Second, Current’s Demonstration program validates water innovations to reduce technology development risk and speed time-to-market. Current independently assess the technical and economic merits and then pilot-tests innovative technologies through a network of utility and industrial sites that include CDWM and MWRD’s facilities. And third, the Current Connect program drives growth and scale of water innovation by connecting validated technologies with global networks of customers and investors.

“Working with Current as an innovation partner gives us access to a pipeline of the vetted innovations we need as a 21<sup>st</sup> century utility,” MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre said. “By validating technology, Current is filling a much-needed role in the water industry by providing a structured and comprehensive approach that enables promising innovations to gain market acceptance.”

The keynote address is part of Mayor’s Emanuel’s trip to Israel to promote investment and innovation in Chicago. From Sept. 9 to 13 the Mayor is traveling with a delegation composed of academic and business leaders from across the Chicago area.

Current launched in 2016 as a partnership of the City of Chicago, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and World Business Chicago. For more information on Current, visit [currentwater.org](http://currentwater.org).

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