

[Home](#)
Customer Services

- › [Ways to Pay Your Bill](#)
- › [Account Information](#)
- › [Customer Assistance](#)
- › [Service Line Protection Program](#)
- › [Water Rates](#)
- › [Property Managers & Trade Professionals](#)

Water Utilities

- › [Drinking Water](#)
- › [Wastewater](#)
- › [Stormwater](#)
- › [Harbor Water](#)
- › [Long Term Control Plan](#)

The Watershed

- › [Watershed Protection](#)
- › [Watershed Recreation](#)

Citywide Initiatives

- › [Regulatory Reform](#)
- › [Environmental Education](#)
- › [Conservation Programs](#)
- › [Air Pollution Control](#)
- › [Noise Codes & Complaints](#)

Business and Professionals

- › [Forms & Permits](#)
- › [Economic Development Unit](#)
- › [Doing Business with DEP](#)
- › [Asbestos Abatement](#)
- › [Construction, Demolition & Abatement](#)

About DEP

- › [Inside DEP](#)
- › [News](#)
- DEP Featured In...
- Stories from DEP
- Press Releases
- Public Notices
- Testimony and Public Comments

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 12-72

October 18, 2012

CONTACT:

Chris Gilbride / Ted Timbers (718) 595-6600

Statement by Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland on 40th Anniversary of Clean Water Act and 75th Anniversary of the Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

“Forty years ago, the visionary and aspirational Clean Water Act helped raise awareness of environmental issues, established the ambitious goal of controlling water pollution, and provided significant federal grants to make it happen. Over the last four decades, as grants tapered off, New York City continued to make significant investments to implement the law – including the investment of over \$10 billion in ratepayer funds since 2002 - which has resulted in drastic improvements to the overall health and ecology of our 520 miles of shoreline and scenic waterways.”

“Critical to keeping our waterways clean is the ability to control and treat the wastewater we generate. New York City built some of the nation’s first wastewater treatment facilities. In fact, today we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Ward’s Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. It was built by the Works Progress Administration as part of a jobs program during the Depression, and that visionary investment in infrastructure helped make New York City a success. The plant integrated cutting edge technology and for decades was the highest capacity sewage treatment facility in the world. Today it services one million New Yorkers and is one of 14 plants that process and treat more than one billion gallons of New York City wastewater every day. We are continually incorporating new technology at Ward’s Island. Upgrades in 2009 made Ward’s Island the largest Single Reactor System for High Ammonia Removal Over Nitrate (SHARON) in the Western Hemisphere. The SHARON process reduces nitrogen discharges at the plant by 15 percent- roughly 10,000 pounds per day.”

“The health of our waterways directly affects New Yorkers’ quality of life, and is a key factor in the continued growth and prosperity of the City. Through PlaNYC, the Bloomberg Administration has committed \$2.9 billion towards additional upgrades to conventional grey infrastructure over the next 20 years. But, like the Wards Island plant, our entire approach to clean water investments has to evolve. That is why we are also focusing on new, cost-effective, and sustainable approaches to improve water quality. Over the next two decades, New York City is planning for \$2.4 billion in public and private funding towards Green Infrastructure to capture rainfall before it enters the sewer system. New York City’s investment in Green Infrastructure will do more for water quality than a similar investment in an all-grey strategy and have substantial, quantifiable benefits, including: a cooler city, reduced energy use, higher property values, and cleaner air.”

More Information

NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Public Affairs
59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373
(718) 595-6600

- › [Capital Projects](#)
- › [Careers at DEP](#)
- › [Environmental Reviews](#)
- › [Interagency MOUs](#)
- › [A to Z Index](#)
- › [Contact Us](#)



“The Clean Water Act helped spur the environmental movement and today is benefiting from an increased awareness of cross-media sustainability initiatives that also seek to address new issues such as climate change. By continuing to make the investments necessary to sustain and extend the remarkable progress we have made, New York will remain a world class City for future generations.”

For more information on the Clean Water Act, visit [www.epa.gov/cwa](#). For more information on the DEP, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](#). For more information on the City of New York, visit [www.nyc.gov](#). For more information on the City of New York, visit [www.nyc.gov](#). For more information on the City of New York, visit [www.nyc.gov](#).

- [View all press releases](#)
- [Sign up to receive DEP press releases by email](#)