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Department of Environmental Protection Installs State-of-the-Art Odor Control and Air Monitoring Systems at North River Wastewater Treatment Plant in Manhattan

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced the completion of a \$106 million project that has improved the odor control and air monitoring systems at the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant, located on the Hudson River between 137th and 145th Streets in Manhattan. The Plant treats up to 340 million gallons of wastewater a day, sits just a few hundred feet from where tens of thousands of West Harlem residents live, and its roof is home to the 28-acre Riverbank State Park. The upgrades to the control system will help ensure that the air within the Plant and odor associated with the wastewater treatment process is captured and treated before it is released. In addition, the Plant's air monitoring system, with stations in the Plant, on Riverbank State Park, and in the West Harlem community, was upgraded with advanced technology that will allow for remote, real-time collection of data and will aid in the rapid detection of excess odor and necessary operational adjustments. The upgrades also include work to the Plant's electrical substation and other critical systems that will ensure it remains in a state of good repair for decades to come.

"Collecting and treating wastewater is essential to public health and the cleanliness of our local waterways," said Commissioner Strickland. "This investment will ensure that the North River Plant is equipped with the most effective technology to perform this vital environmental function while remaining a

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good neighbor to the tens of thousands of residents in West Harlem and the 3 million annual visitors to Riverbank State Park.”

“Riverbank State Park is a much-needed oasis in New York City for healthy recreation, spirited competition, and the arts. I’m grateful for the efforts of Commissioner Strickland and the Department of Environmental Protection to enhance and improve the experience of community residents who enjoy and rely on this park,” said New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Rose Harvey.

“The kids and parents of FC Harlem enjoy playing soccer on a beautiful field near the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant,” said Irv Smalls, Executive Director of FC Harlem Soccer. “The installation of the new odor monitoring equipment will not only make using the field more enjoyable but it shows DEP’s continued commitment to assist in making Riverbank State and Riverside Park a destination for recreation for the West Harlem community.”

During the wastewater treatment process, air is captured from within the Plant and is directed into a large vessel and scrubbed clean with a mixture of chemicals. The air then passes through activated carbon filters that absorb odors and chemicals and remove the remaining odor-producing particles. The treated air is then discharged through 100-foot ventilation stacks on the plant roof. The upgrades to the odor control system included the installation of a cover over the final settling tanks, an improved air capture system in an overflow area, a new exhaust duct system, and new scrubbers, absorbers, and fans within the two central air treatment areas.

The network of air monitors includes seven units, four within the Plant, one on Riverbank State Park, and two in the neighboring community. The monitors constantly measure air samples and send the data to a central computer network which notifies Plant staff if elevated levels are detected.

The North River wastewater treatment plant is built on a 28-acre reinforced concrete platform over the Hudson River and went into operation in 1986. It rests on 2,300 caissons pinned into bedrock up to 230 feet beneath the river. The roof of the building is the home of Riverbank State Park, a popular recreational facility with three swimming pools, an amphitheater, an athletic center, a skating rink, a restaurant, and sports fields. The plant provides wastewater treatment for the hundreds of thousands of people who live and work in, or visit, the west side of Manhattan, from Bank Street in Greenwich Village to Inwood Hill at the island’s northern tip.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3 and the city’s Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city’s reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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