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129 Public School Buildings Across the City Upgraded to Conserve Water

High-Efficiency Bathroom Fixtures Have Reduced Water Consumption at the Schools by Approximately 71 Percent; Corresponding Educational Initiative Helps Students Understand Where New York City Tap Water Comes From and the Importance of Conservation

Approximately 500 School Buildings will be Upgraded by 2019, Saving 4 Million Gallons of Water Every School Day

Photos of the Work Can be Viewed on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd today announced that more than 10,000 new, high-efficiency bathroom fixtures have been installed at 129 public school buildings throughout the five boroughs which has resulted in an approximately 70 percent reduction in water use at each of the buildings, saving more than one million gallons of water each school day. Work will continue on additional schools with the goal of reaching 500 buildings, and roughly 40,000 bathroom fixtures by 2019, resulting in an estimated 4 million gallons of water conserved each school day. DEP is funding the \$50 million program as part of a larger effort to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent prior to the anticipated shutdown and repair of the Delaware Aqueduct, which conveys roughly half of the city's drinking water, in 2022. In addition to ensuring that DEP's 9.4 million customers in New York City and upstate communities have an adequate supply of healthy drinking water during the temporary shutdown of the Delaware Aqueduct, the five percent reduction in consumption will reduce the amount of electricity, chemicals, and other costs associated with operating the water system. It will also cut carbon

More Information

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emissions from the wastewater treatment process by more than 15,500 metric tons per year, the equivalent of removing 3,300 cars from the road or planting more than 400,000 trees and letting them grow for ten years.

“In addition to upgraded facilities for the students, teachers and staff at the schools, these critical investments will help to ensure that we conserve the city’s vital water supply,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “By using less water we’re also helping to reduce our costs and the carbon footprint that is associated with treating the water prior to consumption and cleaning and disinfecting it after it’s used.”

“What better place to save water and cut greenhouse gas emissions than our own schools,” said **Nilda Mesa, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability**. “Commissioner Lloyd and DEP’s initiative is a smart way to bring down the demand for water while reinforcing the infrastructure that brings New York City its world-renowned water, and also contributes to our goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50 percent by 2050 by minimizing the quantity of water going to our wastewater treatment plants. This is a sound investment in our future.”

“Conserving water in our schools is an important initiative that will help reduce carbon emissions and decrease the cost of water consumption across the city,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards, chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection**. “Teaching young students about the importance of conservation and all the work that goes into supplying our tap water will also ensure that they do not take our water system for granted since they are the future caretakers of our city. I commend Commissioner Lloyd for having the foresight to begin preserving water years in advance of the Delaware Aqueduct shutdown.”

Since the program launched DEP has upgraded bathroom fixtures at 129 public school buildings, including:

- 42 school buildings in Brooklyn
- 19 in Manhattan
- 31 in Queens
- 13 in Staten Island
- 24 in the Bronx

One of the keys to ensuring a continued supply of healthy drinking water for the city’s growing population is a project to repair the leaking Delaware Aqueduct, which currently supplies about half the city’s drinking water. DEP is currently excavating two 800 foot deep shafts that will be used to construct a 2.5-mile bypass tunnel around a portion of the Delaware Aqueduct that is leaking in Roseton, in Orange County. The project will also include repair work to fix leaks in Wawarsing, in Ulster County, from the inside of the existing tunnel. The 2.5 mile bypass tunnel will run east from the Town of Newburgh in Orange County, under the Hudson River, to the Town of Wappinger in Dutchess County. In order to facilitate these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down between 2022 and 2023. In preparation for the shutdown, DEP has developed a combination of conservation programs and supplemental supplies that will ensure an uninterrupted supply of water. The program was initially estimated to cost over \$2 billion, but through advances in the engineering and design of the bypass and the water supply projects to support the repair, the estimated cost has been reduced to approximately \$1.5 billion.

As part of the larger water conservation initiative, DEP has developed the Municipal Water Efficiency Program to identify opportunities to conserve water at City-owned properties and facilities. As part of this program, DEP has already begun a partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to install activation buttons on spray showers at 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day.

To encourage water conservation in private properties, DEP also launched a voucher-based program to replace roughly 800,000 outdated residential toilets with high efficiency models. The new toilet rebate program will build on the success of a similar rebate program that ran from 1994 to 1997 and replaced 1.3 million toilets and reduced citywide water consumption by 90 million gallons per day. High-efficiency toilets use only 1.28 gallons of water per flush, compared to traditional toilets which can use as much as five gallons. As a result of those programs, the transition from frontage billing to metered billing, and the roll out of Automated Meter Readers and real-time feedback about water consumption, overall water use in the city has declined from over 1.5 billion gallons a day in 1980 to roughly 1 billion gallons a day at present, while the city's population grew from just over 7.1 million to 8.5 million in the same period.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.4 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. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned 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; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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