





Visiting NYC? Find events, attractions, deals, and more at [nycgo.com](http://nycgo.com)









Overview

News

Mayor's Bio

Officials

      Share



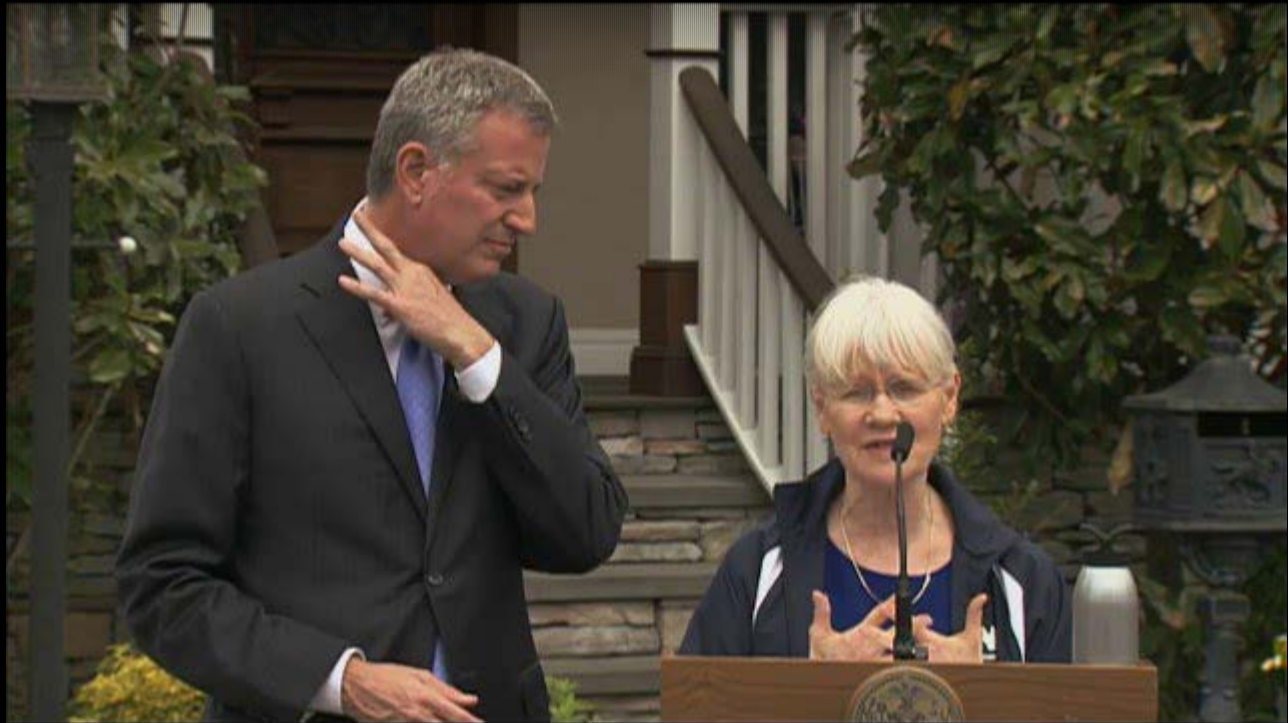
# Mayor de Blasio Proposes \$183 Credit on Water &

# Sewer Bills for Over 664,000 Homeowners

April 25, 2016

Video available at: <http://youtu.be/Kf9xfrrPJ1w>

Mayor de Blasio Proposes \$183 Credit on Water & Sewer Bills for Over 664,000 H...



***Additional proposal calls for a \$250 bill credit to keep 40,000 homes affordable***

***\$183 automatic credit represents a 17 to 40 percent savings on annual bills; administration forgoes future rental payments to keep costs down***

**NEW YORK**—Today Mayor Bill de Blasio proposed a \$183 summer credit on the water and sewer bills of over 664,000 homeowners, in keeping with the City's past efforts to ensure bills stay as low as possible. The 664,000 homeowners represent almost 80 percent of all customers.

Joining the Mayor in today's announcement was Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd, who said the one-time credit results from the Administration's decision to no longer request a rental payment from the NYC Water Board, saving \$244 million in FY17 and \$268 million in FY18. The Mayor has the authority to request or decline to request the rental payment.

"For decades the City has been using the water bill as a cash cow for the general treasury. That's not right. The water bill should be for one thing and one thing only – the cost of water. Our water is safe and pure but it costs to keep it that way. This credit will provide some relief as we work to keep water and sewer bills as low as possible," said **Mayor de Blasio**.

Mayor de Blasio said the fees NYC residents pay will be dedicated solely to the operation, maintenance and expansion of the water and sewer system.

"For too long, rising water rates have unfairly burdened New York City homeowners," said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "Providing New Yorkers with a water bill credit and eliminating the City's rental payment on water bills will provide needed relief to middle class New Yorkers and will help alleviate the cost of owning a home. I thank Mayor de Blasio and the Department of Environmental Protection for their efforts to reduce water and sewer rates and look forward to continuing to work with the de Blasio Administration to make our City more affordable for all New Yorkers."

**Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection**, said, "The rental payment has long hit our small homeowners the hardest. The summer credit on water bills returning the rental payment for class one homeowners will help hundreds of thousands of homeowners throughout our city, especially our senior and low-income homeowners. Combined with deeper affordability programs, the proposals represent a significant savings and ensure that small homeowners can continue to expect uninterrupted water service. Adding these returns to the previous announcement that 50 percent of the rental payment is being returned is a solid step forward in making our water system more equitable. I thank Mayor de Blasio and DEP Commissioner Lloyd for their prioritizing these programs and making our system more sustainable for ratepayers."

"I would like to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd for issuing a one-time \$183 credit for class 1 properties on their bills by end of summer, which will impact more than 664,000 homeowners across the City. I applaud this administration for being several years ahead of schedule on their initial plan to reduce water payments by 2023, and for proactively findings ways to provide relief to homeowners," said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Chair of the Committee on Finance**.

The \$183 credit, which must be approved by the Water Board, is on top of other proposed changes, including a \$250 credit per unit for multi-family residential properties that meet affordability guidelines. The \$250 credit will cover 40,000 apartments or homes. Additional affordability programs, described below, are aimed at assisting the city's most vulnerable customers, including 120,000 seniors.

"Mayor de Blasio's announcement today is good news for the future of our city's water system and for all New Yorkers," said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**.

One to three-family households will receive the \$183 automatic credit in their bills this summer, if

approved by the Water Board. The decision to not take a rental payment is the first time this has occurred since the City originally leased the water and sewer systems to the Board in 1985.

The de Blasio Administration has kept water and sewer bill increases lower than any previous Administration in the past 16 years.

The \$183 credit represents a nearly 17 percent savings on the annual water and sewer bills for a typical single-family homeowner. For approximately 150,000 homeowners, many of whom are seniors, who use less than 95 gallons of water per day and pay the minimum charge, the credit represents a nearly 40 percent savings on their annual water and sewer bills.

The \$183 credit will be applied to all one to three-family homes across the city:

### **Borough Residents**

- **Bronx:** 65,410
- **Brooklyn:** 204,756
- **Manhattan:** 6,279
- **Queens:** 277,495
- **Staten Island:** 110,462

As described in the lease between the City and the Board, the City may request an annual rental payment not to exceed 15 percent of the amount of principal and interest outstanding on the bonds of the Municipal Water Finance Authority. Every mayor since 1985, when the lease took effect, has exercised this discretion and requested the rental payment.

When Mayor de Blasio took office in 2014, he committed to eliminating the rental payment over a number of years in order to ensure that funds collected through water and sewer fees were dedicated solely to maintaining and improving the water and wastewater systems.

In 2015, he returned 40 percent of the payment while pledging to return an additional 10 percent each year until it was phased out. This year, as part of DEP's proposed FY17 water and sewer rate proposal, the Administration had promised to return 50 percent of the payment, or \$122 million. Today, the Administration announced that it will not request any of the \$244 million rental payment available to it through the terms of the lease.

In addition, as part of the proposed water and sewer rates for FY17, DEP has advanced a number of progressive changes to help ensure affordability for its most vulnerable customers:

- **Expansion of low-income assistance program.** The Home Water Assistance Program currently provides an annual credit to 51,700 low-income, senior and disabled homeowners who qualify for the federal Home Energy Assistance Program or the NYC Department of Finance's (DOF) Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption or



**Disabled Homeowners' Exemption.** Last year, the City provided an average credit of \$116 to 51,700 homeowners. In FY17, the value of the annual credit will be increased by the general rate increase, and the program will be extended to as many as 68,000 additional senior homeowners who make less than \$50,000 per year based on income eligibility confirmed by DOF.

- **Multi-family Water Assistance Program.** Multi-family residential properties will be eligible for a \$250 credit per residential unit if they meet affordability criteria (i.e., the average rent or maintenance is affordable at 30 percent or less of income for the average household making below 60 percent of Area Median Income) and execute an affordability agreement containing a minimum of at least 15 remaining years with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development or the Housing Development Corporation. This program will provide a total of \$10 million of assistance to properties serving as many as 40,000 units, while helping to incentivize affordability.
- **Freezing the minimum charge.** Customers who use less than approximately 95 gallons per day are billed at the minimum water charge of \$1.27 per day, including wastewater charges. DEP proposes to freeze the minimum charge for the third consecutive year at the FY14 rate, benefitting 150,000 homeowners – many of whom are seniors – who, combined, will see savings of \$1.4 million. For customers billed based on the minimum charge, the annual water and sewer bill is only \$464 per year.

The New York City Water Board has scheduled five public hearings for the FY17 water rate proposal. Information on the hearings can be found by visiting [nyc.gov/waterboard](http://nyc.gov/waterboard). Following the five public hearings, the Water Board will consider and vote on the FY17 rates and bill credits on May 20, 2016, and the new rates will become effective on July 1, 2016.

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 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](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater).

"I appreciate Mayor de Blasio's efforts to put money back in the wallets of thousands of hardworking Brooklyn homeowners that have been historically burdened by excessive water and sewer fees. Every dollar counts for families when they open their checkbooks to pay their bills, and government has a responsibility to find every possible efficiency and savings opportunity that leaves those dollars in the hands of hard-working taxpayers," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"When the Mayor is right, I say so. This credit will keep hard-earned money for more than 120,000

residents in my district where it belongs: in their own wallets. That's the right move," said **Congressman Dan Donovan**.

**State Senator Marty Golden** said, "I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio for including the elimination of the rental payment on water bills in his Executive Budget. This will help to alleviate some of the financial burdens facing hard working residents. I look forward to continue working with the administration and finding additional ways to reduce utility costs and put money back into the pockets of all New Yorkers."

"With the costs of living constantly increasing, any hard earned money government can put back in the pockets of taxpayers is more than welcome. Water is a basic necessity, not a luxury that someone can simply do without. I'm thankful that the City will be providing this credit to homeowners, and I will continue working with the administration to look for more ways to ease the burden of rising water costs," said **Assembly Member Nicole Malliotakis**.

"This credit will come as welcome news for homeowners in Brooklyn and throughout New York City who are used to feeling unduly burdened by water bills. Thanks to Mayor de Blasio for instituting this cost-saving measure in addition to credits and affordability programs to assist our most vulnerable residents, including our seniors," said **Assembly Member Steven Cymbrowitz, Chair of the Committee on Aging**.

"This \$183 credit is welcome news for middle-class families and provides a much needed boost to homeowners right after the tax season" said **Assembly Member David Weprin**. "Thanks to Mayor Bill De Blasio and DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd, almost 80 percent of all homeowners in New York City will be receiving a well-deserved credit this spring."

**Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo** said, "Though there is little anyone can do to reverse the steep increases in water rates over the past ten years, I have advocated for the elimination of the rental payment as a way to provide a modicum of relief to overburdened homeowners. Every dollar counts. I applaud the Mayor for taking this significant step to help put more dollars back into their pockets."

"Eliminating the rental payment for water in 1 to 3 family homes is a positive step toward alleviating the financial disparities homeowners in our city face. I want to thank the Mayor and administration for prioritizing this issue in the Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**.

"For years the City has stolen homeowners' water taxes to pad the general fund through the guise of excessive 'rental payments' demanded of the Water Board for using the water and sewer infrastructure that keeps New York running, and today's decision to abandon this swindle is good news," said **Council Member Rory Lancman**.

"Mayor de Blasio's announcement regarding the elimination of rental payments by the New York City

Water Board for use of the city's reservoirs and facilities will be felt positively in my constituent's wallets. With the water rate having its lowest increase in 16 years, the Mayor, since his time as Public Advocate has long called for water rate reforms, and he continues his push with today's announcement. In addition, all ratepayers will receive a \$183 credit. My district, including here in Bay Ridge, largely consists of homeowners and small business owners. Removing the annual rental payment from the water rate equation will have a profound economic impact on our working families," said **Council Member Vincent Gentile**.

"For too long homeowners have been drenched with unrelenting water bills that increase year-in and year-out," said **Council Member James Vacca**. "This rebate begins to address a long series of water rate hikes that hit the middle class where it hurts.

*pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov*

(212) 788-2958

<div><div>NYC311</div><div>Top Requests</div></div>		
Pay a Parking Ticket	Alternate Side Parking or Street Cleaning	Affordable Housing
New York City Housing Lottery	NYC Jobs	Food Stamps
Civil Service Exams	Property Deeds and Other Documents	Parking Ticket Assistance and Payment
Bulk Item Disposal	Recycling or Trash Collection Schedule	Sales Tax
About 311	311 Mobile App	311 Twitter
311 Facebook		