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Department of Environmental Protection Announces Leak Notification Program Has Saved New Yorkers \$26 Million Since 2011

Nearly 32,000 Leak Notifications Sent to DEP Customers

Automated Meters Readers Lead to 60% Reduction in Estimated Billing

Customer Billing Disputes in FY 12 Reach Five Year Low

New York City Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced the department's Leak Notification Program has saved New Yorkers nearly \$26 million. The Leak Notification Program began in 2011 to alert owners of one, two and three family homes when their water consumption was much higher than normal. Spikes in consumption can indicate a leak within the property that could substantially increase a customer's water bill if not quickly addressed. In 2012, DEP expanded this program to large residential building owners who proactively sign up for the service. Since the program's inception, more than 31,600 leak detection notices have been sent to DEP customers, saving New Yorkers roughly \$26 million in otherwise wasted water or damaging leaks.

The Leak Notification Program is made possible by Automated Meter Reader (AMR) technology DEP has recently completed installing throughout the city. AMR devices do not measure water consumption but read customers' traditional water meters at least four times each day and transmit that data to DEP automatically. AMR technology allows DEP to get accurate consumption readings from customers and has virtually eliminated estimated water bills. The AMR system also enables DEP to share precise consumption information with customers online on a daily basis and notify them when leaks are detected. DEP has installed AMR devices for more than 820,000 of the agency's 835,000 ratepayers.

"Effective and responsive customer service is a cornerstone of DEP's *Strategy 2011-2014*, the strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make the agency the safest, most effective, cost efficient, and transparent water utility in the nation," said Commissioner Strickland. "Automated Meter Reading technology has revolutionized the way we interact with our customers and has empowered them to make decisions about their water use, identify costly leaks, and save money."

AMR technology has proven to be an invaluable customer service tool. In Fiscal Year 2012 estimated bills were down nearly 60% and water bill disputes reached a five year low. In addition, AMR technology has substantially reduced meter reading and operations costs, saving ratepayers nearly \$8 million annually. DEP provides customers with AMR devices free of

charge. Before the installation of the AMR system, similar water consumption monitoring services could cost over \$1,000 a year and were cost prohibitive for smaller properties.

DEP began installing AMR devices in February of 2009 to improve billing accuracy and provide customers with tools to better manage their water use. Prior to the installation of AMR devices, meters were read in person by customer service agents and due to the fact that they often could not gain access to a property, customers often received estimated bills. Customers with AMR devices can also sign up for a My DEP Account, an online tracking tool, to see the dollar value of their water consumption in real time along with past billing and payment histories. To date, more than 232,000 customers have registered their accounts online. Earlier this month DEP was awarded a Platinum Award for Utility Excellence at the 2012 Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) annual meeting in Portland Oregon, in part for the installation of AMR technology.

DEP manages the 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 employs nearly 6,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 in the upstate watershed. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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