

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 30, 2022
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR ADAMS HELPS NEW YORKERS SAVE UP TO \$150 MILLION ON
OVERDUE WATER BILLS**

*Limited Time Only Program Offers Relief to Nearly 200,000
Customers With Unpaid, Late Water Bills to Avoid Enforcement Actions*

*\$1.2 Billion Owed Poses Threat to NYC's Water Infrastructure and
Could Lead to Additional Rate Hikes*

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Rohit T. Aggarwala today launched a temporary water bill amnesty program to help New Yorkers save up to \$150 million of interest when they pay their overdue water bills. The limited time program will forgive up to 100 percent of interest when customers pay a portion or all of their outstanding water bills. With nearly 200,000 customers owing a combined \$1.2 billion in water bill charges to DEP, this program will help New Yorkers both clear their debt and save money, while ensuring that the city can continue to invest in and maintain the city's critical water infrastructure.

“As New Yorkers continue to recover financially from the pandemic, we are helping almost 200,000 of our city's water customers keep up to \$150 million in their pockets when they resolve their debts through this water bill relief program,” said **Mayor Adams**. “This water amnesty program will enable property owners to settle their debts at a reduced cost, while providing the Department of Environmental Protection with the necessary funds to operate the city's vital water supply and treatment system. I encourage all eligible customers to take advantage of this limited-time savings program we're proud to offer.”

“This water bill amnesty program gives people the breathing room needed to make back payments manageable,” said **Deputy Mayor of Operations Meera Joshi**. “These payments are also critical to supporting our overall water system that provides clean water and the infrastructure to protect the entire water system in the face of climate change.”

“This program allows customers to save money and start fresh in the new year,” said **DEP Commissioner Aggarwala**. “At the same time, it should serve as a reminder to those who have

chronically delinquent accounts and have been withholding payment — that won't be allowed to continue.”

The amnesty program, authorized by the New York City Water Board, will only run for 90 days, from Jan. 30, 2023 to April 30, 2023. To receive amnesty and confirm eligibility, or for more information, customers should visit [DEP's water amnesty website](#) or call (718) 595-7000.

There are nearly 200,000 DEP customers with delinquent water bills, owing a combined \$1.2 billion, and approximately 85 percent of that debt is from residential properties. For customers with a seriously delinquent balance of more than \$1,000 for over a year, DEP will offer three amnesty options:

- If 100 percent of the principal bill is paid, 100 percent of interest will be forgiven;
- If 50 percent of the principal bill is paid, 75 percent of interest will be forgiven; or
- If 25 percent of the principal bill is paid, 50 percent of interest will be forgiven.

Customers who owe less than \$1,000 are still eligible to receive amnesty on 100 percent of their interest if they pay their total bill. All customers who participate in the water amnesty program and leave a remaining outstanding balance will be required to enter into a payment agreement with DEP. Data shows that 85 percent of customers who set up a payment plan stay on it and successfully clear their debt.

To help low-income customers that already participated in New York State's [Low Income Homeowner Water Assistance Program \(LIHWAP\)](#), DEP is offering up to an additional \$30 million to assist these homeowners with forgiveness of up to \$5,000 of their remaining delinquent balances.

“Nearly one in four customers is behind on their water bill. This program gives those New Yorkers who fell behind during the pandemic a way to catch up and save money,” **Alfonso L. Carney Jr., chairman, New York City Water Board**. “The money collected from this program is critical to helping us pay for the vital operation and maintenance of the city's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as funding the critical investments and upgrades we need.”

DEP supplies more than 1 billion gallons of high-quality drinking water and treats 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater for more than 9 million New Yorkers every day. The water system's expenses — which include maintenance, repairs, and capital upgrades — are directly funded by revenue collected from water bills. DEP is facing a growing receivable balance of delinquent accounts, threatening the operations and capital needs of a service the city could not survive without. Customers pay about \$0.01 per gallon in both water and sewer charges, and the average New York City household uses about 70,000 gallons of water per year.

“Hard-working families across this city are already struggling to keep a roof over their head and put food on the table,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “This sensible, one-time assistance initiative will give families the financial breathing room they need, and I look forward to working with the mayor's office and DEP to make this program as successful as possible.”

“Many residents are still reeling from the devastating impact COVID-19 had on our communities and are struggling to make ends meet,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “I want to thank the Department of Environmental Protection for their roll-out of this important amnesty program that will provide support to thousands of New Yorkers as they attempt to get back on their feet.”

“The amnesty program proposed by Mayor Adams and Commissioner Aggarwala is a great way for property owners to settle their water bill debt and for the DEP to get the funding needed for infrastructure upkeep,” said **New York City Councilmember Robert Holden**. “This is a win-win situation, and I applaud the city for taking such an innovative approach.”

“We are facing a challenging time where our communities are struggling to pay for necessities, particularly their utilities. Since the pandemic, families continue to face obstacles in making ends meet. However, with programs like this, we are giving them a second chance. I encourage those eligible to take advantage of DEP’s Amnesty Program, not only to help them get back on track but because everyone deserves an opportunity to catch up on their bills,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velázquez**.

“Water bill amnesty is a much needed relief for homeowners, many of whom have seen their bills skyrocket, especially during the pandemic, said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman**. “My constituents will greatly benefit, and I am appreciative to the mayor for offering this program.”

###