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## Fall Foliage

Schoharie Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## DEP Launches Backflow Prevention Enforcement Initiative

### Inspections Ensure That Devices Are Installed Where Needed

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) this week launched a new initiative to ensure more vigorous protection of the City's water supply system from properties that fail to install backflow prevention devices. Backflow prevention devices prevent contaminated water or chemicals from flowing back into the public drinking water supply system. Certain types of businesses — such as dry cleaners, auto repair shops, and hospitals — are legally mandated to install and maintain approved backflow preventers.

"Our top priority is to protect the quality of the best drinking water in the country. That's why we perform 1,200 tests daily and 420,000 every year," said Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway. "Backflow devices must be installed and operated properly where they are required. This robust inspection and enforcement initiative will help us to prevent contamination before it happens."

"The Council and the Bloomberg Administration have collaborated on many occasions on initiatives to protect the City's drinking water and this is just one more example of that successful cooperation. I applaud the DEP for their prompt and comprehensive response to this threat to our drinking water," said Council Member James F. Gennaro, chair of the Environmental Protection Committee.

Under a \$595,000 one-year contract, AG Consulting Engineers will augment DEP in-house resources and perform inspections to eliminate a backlog of approximately 10,000 properties. Investigators have begun going door-to-door to perform plumbing assessments to determine whether a property needs a backflow prevention device. To date, approximately 50 percent of properties inspected by DEP staff have required installation of backflow prevention devices. If a device is needed, the property owner will need to retain an engineer or architect to design plans. When the plans are reviewed and approved, the device must be

### MORE INFORMATION

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installed by a licensed plumber. If a device is not installed on a property where it is needed, a Commissioner's Order or a violation of up to \$2,000 can be issued.

DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-City treatment plants.

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