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CONTACT:

Michael Saucier / Mercedes Padilla (718) 595-6600

MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

DEP Awards Contract for Automatic Water Meter Reading Throughout the City

New Technology Will Provide Accurate Consumption Information on a More Frequent Schedule

New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Emily Lloyd announced today the award of a contract to acquire advanced Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) technology to improve DEP's water metering system. The \$68 million contract will allow DEP to automate its meter reading capabilities and to improve customer services for its approximately 831,000 metered points serving nearly eight million people in New York City.

"We have been working on improving our Bureau of Customer Services, and this new technology will dramatically improve the accurate and timely readings of the water meters as well as better serve our customers with technologies that will help them to efficiently utilize water resources," said Commissioner Lloyd. "Ultimately, AMR will also provide customers with a system that offers an early warning notice of potentially expensive leaks before they become a problem."

The AMR system consists of small, low-power radio transmitters connected to individual water meters that send daily readings to a network of rooftop receivers throughout the city. In most cases, the transmitters will be placed where meter remote receptacles are currently located. The AMR receivers will be part of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) New York City Wireless Network (NYCWIN). The installation of the AMR system will take approximately three years to complete.

"The largest government-dedicated, high-speed wireless data network in the country, NYCWIN can vastly improve the performance and efficiency of agencies citywide, and DEP's AMR system is one of the first and best examples of an agency leveraging this new technology," said DoITT Commissioner Paul J. Cosgrave. "We are pleased to partner with DEP in meeting its commitment to better service delivery for New Yorkers."

The new AMR technology will be able to send accurate readings to a computerized billing system up to four times

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a day and will largely eliminate the need for estimated bills. It will also provide DEP with the ability to eventually transition to monthly billing, and it will offer improved water consumption data, which will aid DEP's water conservation and system planning initiatives. Since it is an automated system, AMR also eliminates the need for a meter reader to visit customer properties.

DEP contractors will be providing door-to-door free installations of the AMR transmitters for water customers and will also be replacing some old water meters. Installation will begin in Brooklyn and Queens in October, in the Bronx and Manhattan in November of this year, and Staten Island in 2009.

DEP piloted two AMR technologies in parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan last summer, and chose the Aclara technology after determining that it was more effective in transmitting signals in New York City's densely built urban environment. AMR equipment operates on a low-power frequency band reserved specifically for meter reading transmissions. It is unlikely to interfere with the operation of any other electronic equipment.

Similar systems are currently used by the Boston and Washington, D.C. water systems and have led to higher payment rates in both cases. A similar system is also being installed by Pacific Gas & Electric for their gas customers throughout central and northern California, and Aclara's technology has also been selected by the city of Toronto.

AMR is a key part of DEP's ongoing transformation of DEP's Bureau of Customer Services (BCS). As part of this initiative, customer service and billing practices have improved significantly, with more robust, accurate and easily accessible information now available to all 826,000 water and sewer account holders throughout the City.

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1.1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents throughout New York State through a complex network of nineteen reservoirs, three controlled lakes and 6,200 miles of water pipes, tunnels and aqueducts. DEP is also responsible for managing storm water throughout the City and treating wastewater at 14 in-City wastewater treatment plants. DEP carries out federal Clean Water Act rules and regulations, handles hazardous materials emergencies and toxic site remediation, oversees asbestos monitoring and removal, enforces the City's air and noise codes, bills and collects on City water and sewer accounts, and manages city-wide water conservation programs.