

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 15, 2012

No. 18

DEP Releases 2011 Progress Report on Ambitious and Forward-Thinking Strategic Plan

Report Finds 99% of Initiatives Achieved or Underway in Plan's First Year

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today released the 2011 Progress Report on *Strategy 2011-2014*, which found that major advancements have been made toward making DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. Released last year with Mayor Bloomberg, the groundbreaking plan outlined 29 broad goals and 100 distinct initiatives in the areas of strategic planning and performance; customer service; worker safety, public health, and environmental protection; operations, including water supply, distribution and treatment, and capital; regulatory relationships and policy; harbor water quality; energy; hazardous materials; and air and noise pollution. The product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, *Strategy 2011 – 2014* built on *PlaNYC*, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint for New York City. In the plan's first year, 63 initiatives have been fully or partially achieved while 36 are on track to be completed on schedule. One initiative was deferred after DEP concluded that capital resources should be redirected to repair the Rondout-West Branch Tunnel section of the Delaware Aqueduct to ensure continued and uninterrupted delivery of water to customers.

"When we launched *Strategy 2011 – 2014* last year, we knew that we were making an unprecedented commitment to improve and innovate at every level," said Commissioner Strickland. "Despite confronting record-breaking rainfall last year from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee and other unexpected challenges, we have kept our focus on achieving our long-term vision. This report demonstrates that DEP is well on its way to becoming the safest, most efficient, cost-effective and transparent water utility in the nation. Thanks to extraordinary support from Mayor Bloomberg and our partners across city government, we've made remarkable progress toward achieving the goals of this ambitious plan. In the first year alone of this ambitious blueprint, we've saved customers \$10 million through Leak Notification, secured the ban of hydraulic fracturing in the watershed, opened three of our upstate reservoirs to recreational boating, and signed a draft modified consent agreement with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on the *NYC Green Infrastructure Plan*. Truly, the best always do better."

Customer Service

Strategy 2011 – 2014 enhances DEP's ability to provide transparent, high-quality and efficient customer service. DEP serves three distinct groups: nine million New Yorkers who drink NYC Water every day, including eight million residents in New York City and nearly one million people who live in Westchester, Putnam, Ulster and Orange counties; 836,000 customers who pay for the water and sewer services that fund the city's water and wastewater system; and

the developers, engineers, construction companies, and plumbers that need DEP permits to continue the city's growth.

Key 2011 Customer Service Milestones:

- Launched Leak Notification program alerting customers to deviations from normal consumption rates
- Released a Request for Proposals for development of a service line protection plan to mitigate financial duress incurred from ruptures to water or sewer lines
- Launched online Water and Sewer Permitting System for businesses, engineers and contractors
- Simplified Community Right to Know online reporting process (Tier II) by allowing filers to report hazardous substances through a single certification letter amending prior year's submissions

Operations and Capital

DEP's ability to confront future operational challenges—both planned and unanticipated—is vital to the health, safety, and economic development of New York City and the upstate watersheds. In 2011, the resiliency of DEP's water supply system was tested by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, which brought record rainfall to the west-of-Hudson watershed region. These challenges showcased DEP's vital responsibilities in managing a system comprising 19 reservoirs, 295 miles of aqueducts, 6,600 miles of water mains, 7,400 miles of sewers, 965 water quality monitoring stations, 109,000 fire hydrants, 144,000 catch basins and 14 in-city wastewater treatment plants.

Key 2011 Operations Milestones:

- Certified that the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant meets federal Clean Water Act (CWA) standards for secondary treatment two years ahead of schedule
- Lowered repair time of high-priority fire hydrants to an average of 5.9 days from 7.5 days in 2010 through a new partnership with the New York City Fire Department
- Expanded recreational boating access to Neversink, Pepacton and Schoharie Reservoirs and opened 6,765 acres of watershed land for recreational use

DEP has the largest capital program of any city agency and one of the largest construction budgets in the region, with \$11 billion in current construction and \$3 billion more in the planning or design stages. *Strategy 2011 – 2014* included initiatives to ensure that projects remain on time and on budget in order to keep water rates as low as possible.

Key 2011 Capital Milestones:

- Completed Project Management Information System (PMIS) to manage and control project schedules and budgets and make relevant data viewable online
- Created internal Project Controls Division to maintain and expand control systems as well as support project teams in budget and schedule management
- Developed a 10-year capital plan prioritizing funding for critical assets

Worker Safety

The ambitious goals of *Strategy 2011 – 2014* can only be met if conditions are safe for DEP's nearly 6,000 employees. This requires continuous training, rigorous compliance, and open communication among DEP staff.

Key 2011 Worker Safety Milestones:

- Reduced total recordable workplace illnesses and injuries by 42% year-to-date
- Developed EHS Performance Metrics to evaluate compliance with regulations, provide risk assessments, and foster continuous improvements
- Implemented the Training Tracking and Reporting System and computer-based training for several mandatory courses

Sustainability

DEP promotes the public health, economic development and quality of life of New York City by developing sustainable environmental policy and enforcing regulations designed to reduce air and noise pollution and to control asbestos removal. DEP administers the city's Air Pollution Control Code (Air Code), which is in the early phase of a major overhaul to update existing provisions and to look at new strategies to improve the city's air quality. DEP also enforces the Noise Code, which was comprehensively revised in 2005 for the first time in 30 years to more effectively address one of the most common quality-of-life complaints. The asbestos abatement industry is also regulated by DEP, which establishes training, certification and work procedures for contractors conducting asbestos inspections and abatement.

Key 2011 Sustainability Milestones:

- Signed a draft consent agreement with DEC to adopt the *NYC Green Infrastructure Plan* into CWA compliance
- Established the Office of Green Infrastructure and awarded \$3.8 million in Green Infrastructure Grants
- Held stakeholder meetings in the five boroughs in revising city Air and Noise Codes

Additionally, last year DEP launched H2OStat, an agency-wide real-time performance assessment system based on more than 200 key indicators. Once fully implemented, H2OStat will provide a centralized data source for all performance metrics, streamlining nearly 20 existing analytic models and databases into a single core management tool. DEP also launched *Operational Excellence – The Best Always Do Better (OpX)*, an ambitious effort to transform the agency by enhancing productivity, improving services, and reducing costs. *OpX* is expected to produce millions of dollars in annual savings over the next four years by implementing industry best practices and leveraging staff expertise. The full 2011 Progress Report can be viewed by visiting www.nyc.gov.dep.

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 7,400 miles of sewer lines and 95 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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