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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York City Meets Federal Safety Regulations For Lead In Drinking Water

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that the City's Residential Lead in Drinking Water program once again has successfully met all government standards.

"I am pleased to report that DEP's Citywide Lead in Drinking Water program has met the federal guidelines for the fourth year in a row, which ended on June 30, 2002," said Commissioner Ward.

New York City water is virtually lead-free when it is delivered from the City's upstate reservoir system. However, water can absorb lead from solder, fixtures and pipes in the plumbing of some buildings and homes. To minimize absorption of lead from plumbing systems, DEP adds a corrosion control compound and adjusts the water's pH. To monitor the effectiveness of corrosion control efforts, the Department has been tracking lead levels in tap water taken from selected homes around the City.

For people concerned that lead might be present in their drinking water, the Department also instituted a comprehensive public education program that lists simple steps they can take to reduce the possibility of lead in drinking water. For instance, before using water that has been standing in pipes for more than six hours, people may flush the cold-water tap for 30 seconds to two minutes until the water turns cold; and, because hot water is more apt to leach lead from plumbing than cold water, people should only use water from the cold water tap for cooking, drinking and preparing baby formula. Consumers of water in the City may request a free kit to test for lead in drinking water by calling 718-DEP-HELP (718-337-4357). Additional information is available from the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.