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**Department of Environmental Protection
Opening Five New Police Precincts Upstate to
Better Protect The City's Water Supply**

**DEP Police Increased From 75 to 219 Officers as Part
of Post-9/11 Security Upgrade**

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that as part of the overall effort to increase security for the City's water supply the DEP is opening five new police precincts in the City's upstate watershed this winter.

The newest will open tomorrow in Beerston, Town of Walton, Delaware County, with a new \$2 million police precinct and environmental police training center. Overall, the DEP will spend over \$13 million on the five new police precincts and training center. The five new precincts bring state-of-the-art technology to environmental policing and replace old and worn structures throughout the watershed. The DEP Police operate out of seven precincts throughout the watershed and in Yonkers.

Since 2002, the City has also increased the size of the DEP Police from 75 to 219 environmental police officers, including 48 officers who were sworn in December 1. The DEP Police have full law enforcement powers and have been the chief protectors of the water supply since the force's creation in 1907. They also supplement local police agencies in the watershed in their day-to-day activities of community service and public protection.

"The security of the water supply is a very serious matter and the Bloomberg Administration has made substantial increases in that area," said Commissioner Ward. "We consult regularly with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to evaluate threats to the water supply and ways to counteract those threats. In addition, a complete vulnerability assessment has been conducted of the entire water supply system by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The DEP is spending over \$70 million to implement the Corps' recommendations and another \$30 million to address other issues outside of the Corps' work effort."

Tomorrow's opening is of the Second Precinct and Stephen J. King Environmental Police Training Facility in the Town of

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Walton, Delaware County, near the Cannonsville Reservoir. Early next year there will be new precincts opening in Gilboa, Schoharie County, near the Schoharie Reservoir and Downsville, Delaware County, near the Pepacton Reservoir.

In keeping with its partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it was the Corps that did most of the design work for the new buildings and which served as construction manager for the projects.

"The new precincts don't just allow us to better meet the threat of terrorism," said Commissioner Ward. "They'll also let us do a better job of addressing more common problems in the watershed. They will help to shorten response time to environmental complaints, spills and other incidents and will provide an extra measure of community police protection for our upstate neighbors, who we rely on to report suspicious activity."

Additional police precincts and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' assessment are just some of the security measures being taken to protect the water supply, not all of which will be made public. In the days immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center, the DEP suspended all recreational activities on watershed lands. In addition, the New York State Department of Correctional Services provided over 75 officers from its elite Critical Incident Response Team to assist the DEP Police in the watershed. Recreation activities have since been reinstated and the corrections officers have been replaced with new DEP Police officers and technological advancements.

Parts of the water supply system that were previously open to the public have been closed, including roadways that pass over dams. Boating areas have been restricted at the Kensico and New Croton Reservoirs.

In addition to increasing the number of DEP Environmental Police Officers, training opportunities and facilities for the officers are being enhanced. In November 2002, the DEP created the Environmental Police Academy, the first of its kind in the nation, which focuses on the unique mission of environmental policing and protecting the nation's largest water supply. The December 12th opening in Beerston also includes the new Stephen J. King Environmental Police Training Facility. The center will include classrooms, a woodland studies area, environmental investigations practical training field, environmental staging areas, wilderness trails, an off-road emergency vehicle operators course and police firing ranges. Designated areas will be developed for school and community educational activities. The facility will also be available for practical exercises for local, state and federal emergency first responders.

The Stephen J. King Environmental Police Training Facility is named in memory of former Division of Environmental Police Director Stephen J. King, who served as Director from 1998 to 1999 and who died while in office.

The first of the five new precincts opened November 26 in the Town of Grahamsville, Sullivan County, near the Neversink and Rondout Reservoirs. It will house the Environmental Enforcement Division's Fifth Precinct and the Detective Bureau and Intelligence Division. A second precinct opened December 5 in the Town of Olive, Ulster County, near the Ashokan Reservoir. That building will house the Environmental Enforcement Division's Fourth Precinct, the West of Hudson Division Command Center, and the Detective Bureau, Intelligence Division and Special Operations Division, which includes the Emergency Services

Unit, Canine Unit and Strategic Patrol Unit.