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## Department of Environmental Protection Joins Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Community Board 12, Assembly Member Jeff Dinowitz and Council Members Andy King and Andrew Cohen to Distribute Rain Barrels to 320 Homeowners in the Bronx

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### Rain Barrels Collect Precipitation, Reduce Residential Water Bills and Help to Protect the Health of the Bronx River and the Hutchinson River

Photos of the Event are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Saturday joined New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Assembly Member Jeff Dinowitz, City Council Members Andy King and Andrew Cohen, and Community Board 12 District Manager George Torres to distribute rain barrels to approximately 320 homeowners in the Wakefield neighborhood of the Bronx. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner's water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of local waterways, including the Bronx River and the Hutchinson River. Over the last several years, DEP has distributed more than 4,000 rain barrels to New York City homeowners. Saturday's event took place at the Community Board 12 Office, located at 4101 White Plains Road, and the rain barrels were provided free of charge.

"Rain Barrels are the perfect solution for homeowners looking to protect the environment while also reducing their water bill," said **DEP Commissioner Emily**

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**Lloyd.** "By collecting rain water and reusing it to water plants and gardens, homeowners are conserving water while also reducing the amount of pollution in the Bronx River and Hutchinson River."

"Water is such a fundamental necessity and because we are fortunate to have a plentiful supply of it in New York State, we sometimes take it for granted," said **New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie of the Bronx.** "That's why I'm proud to be a part of this event and to help connect New Yorkers with the tools they need to ensure the future of one of our state's most valuable natural resources. Initiatives like this truly have a huge impact on both our communities and the environment."

"Bronx Community Board 12 is excited to be working with DEP giving away free rain barrels to our homeowners that will help them save money and the environment," said **George Torres, District Manager for Community Board 12.** "Rain barrels promote water conservation and keeps storm water run-off from clogging our City sewer system."

"I am very pleased to partner with my colleagues in government and with the DEP for this free rain barrel giveaway," said **Assembly Member Jeff Dinowitz.** "These rain barrels will help us save water and alleviate flooding. I look forward to working with my fellow elected officials on other projects that benefit our community."

"I remember the days when my grandmother use to catch water in a barrel to water the vegetables on the farm in Georgia," said **Council Member Andy King, 12<sup>th</sup> CD.** "This old-fashion technique is very effective today for homeowners who want to ensure that their gardens don't suffer in summer heat. Not only will harvesting rainwater safeguard the plants, but it'll help save on your water bill. You can't beat that!"

"Rain barrels not only help homeowners save money on their water bills, but they also help to prevent street flooding during rain storms," said **Council Member Andrew Cohen.** "Rain barrels can be costly, but thanks to the NYC Department of Environmental Protection and Community Board 12, hundreds of District 11 residents were able to receive a free 60-gallon barrel this past weekend. Thank you for ensuring that my neighbors have every opportunity to keep their homes and neighborhoods environmentally friendly."

DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City's Green Infrastructure Plan that aims to capture stormwater before it can ever enter the sewer system and thereby reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. DEP has committed to invest \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls, such as rain barrels, to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows by 2030.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP's efforts to conserve water as part of a \$1.5 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of this initiative, DEP has begun a project to repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that supplies roughly half of the city's daily drinking water. In order to complete these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down in 2022. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent.

In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP is installing activation buttons on spray showers at 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. Work is also underway to install new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. And, DEP has partnered with hotels, restaurants and hospitals across the city to reduce water use at these facilities by five percent annually.

Installation of rain barrels is easy and they require little maintenance. Each homeowner who received a rain barrel on Saturday was provided with an installation kit and instructions. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

DEP manages New York 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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