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Pepacton Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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**DEP Kicks Off Rain Barrel Program to Help Homeowners Conserve Water**

**Program Also Aimed to Alleviate Pressure on the City's Sewers During Rainfall Events**

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today the Rain Barrel Giveaway Program, a pilot to help homeowners collect stormwater from their rooftops and conserve potable water when irrigating their lawns, gardens or landscaping. The Rain Barrel Program is one of several DEP pilots to address stormwater runoff and alleviate pressure on the City's sewers during rainfall events. This program will serve as a pilot for stormwater runoff reduction strategies.

"Improved stormwater management is an important component of DEP's efforts that use a variety of innovative, sustainable techniques to help mitigate the City's stormwater runoff going into the sewer system," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "This program is also an important part of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC initiative to build a greener, more livable city and help our customers to conserve our precious resources."

New York City will implement this program for the first time this summer. The rain barrel program helps residents of Community Boards 12 and 13 in Queens conserve water. DEP reached out to community boards and civic associations and sent mailings to single-family and multifamily homeowners in the pilot area. DEP will deliver 250 rain barrels this month and homeowners will install the rain barrels themselves. Rain barrels connect directly to the existing downspout to collect water for irrigation needs, such as watering lawns and gardens, which often account for up to 40% of a household's summer water consumption. Using the stored water can reduce the demand on the City's drinking water supply during the summer's hottest days.

The rain barrel program will also help reduce stormwater runoff that, in some cases, can overwhelm the City's sewer system, causing street flooding. As described in DEP's Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection Plan, the more stormwater is collected in barrels and used to water lawns and gardens, the less burden is placed on sewers.

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Rain barrels have been installed in other American and European cities and have been shown to be effective including the Northwest, where milder weather and less intense rainfall patterns are conducive to rain barrel use. DEP's pilot program will help determine the effectiveness of rain barrels under New York City's climatic conditions.

This pilot program will be closely monitored for next two years by DEP to study all the benefits for the communities in which they are installed. As part of its Rain Barrel Giveaway Program, DEP has already provided three rain barrel installation trainings free of costs and geared towards the 250 homeowners who will be receiving a rain barrel as part of DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program.