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# Mayor de Blasio Names Vincent Sapienza as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection

October 3, 2017

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today named Vincent Sapienza as the Commissioner of the City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). During his 34 years with DEP, Sapienza has served in leadership posts for several of the key operating divisions, has overseen major capital improvements and managed during emergencies, including Hurricane Sandy. Sapienza has been serving as the Acting Commissioner of the department since the retirement of former Commissioner Emily Lloyd, during the summer of 2016.

“All 8.5 million New Yorkers rely every day on the essential services provided by DEP, including a reliable supply of the best tap water in the world, and that is one reason Vinny’s over three decades of experience at the department make him the ideal candidate to be its next leader,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Vinny has also led DEP’s wastewater treatment bureau, which is primarily responsible for the incredible rebound in the health of our waterways, and the department’s capital improvement program, one of the largest in the region. Moving forward we will work together to ensure that we maintain reasonable water and sewer rates, while continuing to push forward critical infrastructure projects that are essential to the future of our

city.”

In the coming years, Sapienza will oversee several projects critical to New York City including finalizing the Filtration Avoidance Determination for the City’s West of Hudson reservoirs, building the Delaware Aqueduct Bypass Tunnel 600 feet below the Hudson River and preparing for the shutdown of the Aqueduct in 2022. He will also push to continue the work to improve the health of New York Harbor, including the ongoing build-out of the City’s ambitious Green Infrastructure program.

“Having spent 34 years with DEP, across several different operating divisions, I know many of my colleagues personally and we are committed to our mission to protect public health and the environment in New York City,” said **DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. “I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for the opportunity to lead the department as we confront several challenges, including the repair of the Delaware Aqueduct, continued improvements to our wastewater collection and treatment system and the buildout of the most ambitious green infrastructure program in the country, expansion of the successful Bluebelt program on Staten Island and the creation of a more robust drainage system in southeast Queens.”

Since joining DEP in 1983, Sapienza has dedicated his career to protecting and improving New York City’s critical water infrastructure. Prior to his role as Acting Commissioner, Sapienza served as Deputy Commissioner for DEP’s Bureau of Engineering Design and Construction, where he managed the water and wastewater capital improvement programs, including the construction of the \$3.2 billion Croton Water Filtration Plant in the Bronx. He has also served as Deputy Commissioner of DEP’s Bureau of Wastewater Treatment, where he oversaw the collection and treatment of wastewater and led the effort to create the NYC Wastewater Resiliency Plan. Sapienza is a New York State Licensed Professional Engineer and holds a B.S. from Columbia University and an MBA from Hofstra University’s School of Business.

DEP is the largest municipal water and wastewater utility in the nation. This critical work includes providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water each day to more than 9 million residents. The watershed 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 deliver water throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees. In addition, DEP has one of the largest capital programs in the region that will help to create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. DEP also regulates air quality, hazardous waste, and critical quality of life issues, including noise.

**Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council's Environmental Protection Committee**, said, "I congratulate Vinny Sapienza on being appointed as Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. Vinny has been a stalwart environmental advocate as Acting Commissioner and I have no doubt he will continue to make sustainability and environmental protection a top priority as Commissioner. As our city continues to move closer toward our goal of reducing carbon emissions 80% by 2050, we need people like Vinny leading our agencies."

"In the coming years, the Department of Environmental Protection will be tasked with finding ways to better conserve and protect our most precious resource: water. Vincent Sapienza has the commitment, experience, and leadership to oversee this critical work," said **Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair of the Council's Committee on Recovery and Resiliency**.

"With his decades of experience, his keen knowledge and understanding of the city's water infrastructure and his willingness to listen to input from local stakeholders, Vincent Sapienza is the right person to lead the Department of Environmental Protection," said **City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo**. "Since I took office four years ago, Vincent has always been willing to listen and to work closely with me to solve problems, whether it was local flooding issues or improving critical infrastructure projects in my district. I look forward to continuing our good relationship to the benefit of Staten Island in the years to come."

"Commissioner Sapienza has dedicated his life to protecting the environment and has continued the great work of his predecessors while serving as Interim Commissioner," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. "He is a crucial ally in the fight against climate change in New York City and I look forward to continuing our work of pushing the City in a more sustainable and resilient direction."

"Congratulations to Commissioner Sapienza on this very well-deserved promotion. It's been great to work with him as Acting Commissioner on community issues during the last several years, and I look forward to a continued, fruitful partnership," said **Council Member Chaim Deutsch**.

"I would like to congratulate my good friend Vincent Sapienza on his recent appointment to Commissioner of DEP," **Council Member Ulrich** said. "For three decades, Vincent rose the ranks at the Department. I have had the pleasure of working with Vincent in various capacities at DEP, and am confident that his extensive experience will be an asset to the City."

"Vinnie Sapienza knows his way around the city's maze of sewage treatment plants and drinking water facilities. He's a straight shooter. And he understands the importance of keeping the city's water and sewer system in a state of good repair and of preparing the city for the challenges of a changing climate," said **Eric A. Goldstein, New York City Environment Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council**.

"Commissioner Sapienza is experienced and talented -- someone we can work with, when we agree and when we disagree. His challenge will be to efficiently run the city's enormous water supply and treatment systems, creatively restore NYC's superfund sites and meet higher water quality standards set by the state in 2016 in recognition of the fact that people are boating and swimming in city waters in record numbers. The waterfront isn't the end of the city anymore - it's the beginning of a whole new opportunity to connect with nature and restore biodiversity, and we look forward to partnering with Commissioner Sapienza to make the most of it," said **Paul Gallay, Riverkeeper President**.

**Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters** said: "In his more than thirty years at DEP, Vincent Sapienza has risen through the ranks to become a highly seasoned and accomplished administrator of New York City's water infrastructure. He has dedicated his career to protecting our public health and environment, safeguarding our drinking water, working to reduce nitrogen pollution in our waterways, and improving the resilience of our wastewater system. Most recently, he has capably led DEP while serving as Acting Commissioner and we congratulate him on his well-deserved appointment as Commissioner."

"The Jamaica Bay Ecowatcher's commends Mayor de Blasio on his choice of Vincent Sapienza as DEP Commissioner. Commissioner Sapeinza has a long and distinguished career at DEP and one in which a tremendous positive impact has been made to the environment in general and to Jamaica Bay in specific. From Waste treatment plant upgrades that led to water quality improvements to wetland restoration and oyster reef creation, he has been at the forefront of protecting the environment and making Jamaica Bay a great natural resource that will be enjoyed by generations to come," said **Dan Mundy Sr., President, Jamaica Bay EcoWatchers.**

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