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DEP Selects Vendor to Beneficially Reuse Treated Sludge

Cost-Effective Program Replaces Former Contract with NYOFCo

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced the selection of WeCare Organics in response to a Request for Proposals to transport, process, and market biosolids for beneficial reuse. DEP's 14 wastewater treatment plants handle an average of 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day, which generate approximately 1,200 tons per day of solid byproducts that are also known as biosolids or treated sludge. This proposed contract will replace a contract with the New York Organic Fertilizer Company (NYOFCo) that was terminated in 2010 due to its increasing costs in processing treated sludge for use as fertilizer at a facility in Hunts Point. Under the new proposed contract, WeCare Organics will bring up to 400 tons per day of biosolids to its processing site in rural eastern Pennsylvania where it will be stabilized with lime and made into a product suitable for beneficial reuse. WeCare will use the organic material for mine reclamation projects or sell it as compost to garden centers, nurseries, and landscape supply companies. Once approved, the new five-year contract will start in spring 2012 at a cost of approximately \$56 million.

"When we ended the NYOFCo contract in 2010 because it was too costly to continue, we committed to seek alternative, sustainable and cost-effective ways to handle the biosolids that New Yorkers generate every day," said Commissioner Strickland. "Our selection today fulfills that promise to process sludge in a beneficial way while at the same time using a significantly less expensive option that protects our ratepayers. Converting our sludge from waste to a valuable resource moves us closer to achieving Mayor Bloomberg's vision for a greener, greater New York."

In June 2010, DEP terminated its contract with the New York Organic Fertilizer Company due to its increasing costs in processing approximately 600 of the 1,200 tons of sludge that the wastewater treatment process produces each day for use as fertilizer. At the time the contract was terminated, it cost approximately \$30 million per year. DEP issued a Request for Proposals to search for a sustainable alternative to landfilling that would be less costly technology for innovative alternatives in the beneficial reuse of sludge. Under the new proposed contract, WeCare Organics, based out of Jordan, NY will collect up to 400 tons a day of biosolids after it has been dewatered at a cost of about \$11 million per year—a roughly 50% savings over the NYOFCo contract on a cost per ton of biosolids basis. The remaining roughly 800 tons of biosolids are handled through a mix of land application and landfilling.

Sewage sludge is the bulk of the residual material removed during the wastewater treatment process. Wastewater treatment plants use physical, chemical and biological processes to remove on average more than 90% of the organic material in sewage. Raw sludge is first digested in oxygen-free tanks where it is heated and mixed for several days. This digestion process stabilizes the sludge by converting much of the organic material into water, carbon

dioxide and methane gas. The digested sludge is what is then transported by pipeline or sludge vessel to dewatering facilities where centrifuges remove much of the water. This final treated sludge, also known as biosolids, is treated to remove nearly all of the pathogens that can be found in raw sludge.

A public hearing will be held at DEP, 59-17 Junction Boulevard, 17th Floor Conference Room, Flushing, New York, on December 29, 2011, starting at 10 a.m. on the proposed contract between DEP and WeCare Organics, LLC. for transporting, processing & marketing biosolids in New York City. The contract will then be sent to the Comptroller for final approval.

DEP manages the 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years. For more information, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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