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Fall Foliage

Pepacton Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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Statement of NYC Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway On the Water Board Vote to Adopt the Fiscal Year 2011 Water Rate

"Over the past three weeks, I have attended all six public hearings on the Fiscal Year 2011 water rate proposal that DEP made to the Water Board in April. At each hearing, I explained DEP's budget for the coming year, and how the rapid expansion of unfunded Federal mandates is a primary driver of the significant water rate increases that have been necessary over the past four years.

Federal and State water quality standards are intended to protect public health, and supplying and treating water to meet those standards is DEP's most important obligation. But a one-size-fits-all approach has substantially, and unnecessarily, increased the financial burden of the water system on New Yorkers, many of whom are struggling in these difficult economic times.

Elected officials and the many people who came to the hearings delivered a consistent message: keep water rates as low as possible by operating efficiently and making capital investments for necessary projects at a pace that New Yorkers can afford.

Some people expressed concerns that the hearings were merely a formality and that their voices would fall upon deaf ears. They did not. Today, based on the public's feedback, the Water Board doubled the discount for customers who sign up to pay their water bills through DEP's direct debit program, which will give an additional bit of relief to New Yorkers.

DEP is committed to doing everything possible to keep rates down next year and in the future. We have already enacted an across-the-board 8% budget cut, and we are currently going line by line though our capital program to find every way to trim costs.

But more can – and should – be done. We are engaging our Federal and State regulatory partners to ease the burden of mandates moving forward. And we have asked the City Council to extend and expand water lien-sale authority to

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make sure that those who can afford to pay their water bills actually pay. We believe that these steps will help us present a rate next year that is more affordable without putting our critical infrastructure at risk.

I want to thank the members of the Water Board for their work. Though not easy, their vote ensures that DEP will have the resources we need to continue to provide the high-quality, great tasting water that 9 million New Yorkers expect every day."

DEP is responsible for proposing a water rate that meets the financial obligations necessary to provide water and wastewater services to more than nine million New Yorkers. The Fiscal Year 2011 water rate adopted today includes the following components:

- ▶ A 12.9% increase to the water rate.
- ▶ A 2% discount for customers who sign up for direct debit payments.
- ▶ An increased service termination fee from \$500 to \$1,000.
- ▶ A Stormwater Pilot Program for certain stand-alone parking lots.

DEP manages the City's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities as scientists, engineers, surveyors, administrative professionals, and other professions.

Related Links

- ▶ [DEP Presents Fiscal Year 2011 Water Rate Proposal \(April 9, 2010\)](#)
- ▶ [View the water rate proposal presentation \(PDF\)](#)

- ▶ [View all press releases](#)
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