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## DEP Completes Alley Creek Combined Sewer Overflow Facility

### New Facility Prevents Up to 134 Million Gallons per Year of Sewer Overflows from being Discharged into Little Neck Bay

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the completion of a \$130 million Alley Creek Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Facility in Bayside, Queens. The facility will collect up to five million gallons of combined sewage every time it rains that was previously discharged into Alley Creek and Little Neck Bay. During heavy storms, the sewer system often reaches capacity and must discharge a mix of stormwater and wastewater — called a combined sewer overflow, or CSO — into the city's surrounding waterways. The completion of this retention facility will result in immediate water quality improvements in Alley Creek and Little Neck Bay, including increased dissolved oxygen concentrations, decreased coliform levels, and fewer floatables and settleable solids within the creek and bay. Once a storm subsides, the retained CSOs will be pumped to the Tallman Island Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment. Now that the facility is in operation, the overall volume of combined overflows discharged into Alley Creek will decrease from approximately 246 million gallons per year to 112 million gallons, a 54.4% reduction per year.

"The completion of the Alley Creek CSO Facility is a major step forward in our efforts to improve harbor water quality, especially in Northeast Queens," said Commissioner Holloway. "Since 2002, the City has invested more than \$1.6 billion to reduce combined sewer overflows citywide, mainly to upgrade and build four giant combined sewer overflow retention facilities that will prevent a total of more than 100 million gallons of untreated wastewater and stormwater from polluting our harbor each time it rains. These investments, along with billions of additional dollars Mayor Bloomberg has committed to upgrade our 14 wastewater treatment plants have made our harbor cleaner and healthier than it has been in more than a century. With the implementation of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan that will guide DEP's CSO investments for the next 20 years, water quality will continue to get even better."

"It is great news that the retention facility project, which

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started when I was the area Councilman, is completed," said Senator Tony Avella. "I want to congratulate DEP for their hard work in conducting this massive project that will certainly eliminate wastewater runoff, enhance the experience of Alley Pond Park for residents of northeast Queens and will help to relieve the reoccurring flooding problems that have plagued the area for years."

"The Alley Creek CSO Facility is sorely needed. The facility is a welcome step toward stabilization of the creek, wetlands, and bay," said Council Member Dan Halloran. "I commend the DEP for its dedication to the environmental stability of Northeast Queens, improving the quality of our water, and helping protect our valuable wetlands."

"The completion of the facility is great news for the residents of Eastern Queens," said Council Member Mark S. Weprin. "Avoiding the discharge of sewage into Alley Creek and Little Neck Bay means a cleaner and healthier environment for local residents."

The Alley Creek CSO Facility consists of a concrete two barrel sewer, storage tanks and outfall structure. During large storm events, water can overflow the sides of the two barrels before being discharged into the creek into adjacent storage tanks, which can store up to five million gallons. At the conclusion of the storm event, an automated valve is opened to allow the collected combined sewage to flow to the Old Douglaston Pump Station, which then pumps the overflow to the Tallman Island Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment and disinfection. The Alley Creek CSO Facility, which began to be constructed in 2005, also includes additional combined storm sewers to increase the capacity of the sewer system and help eliminate sewer surcharging and street flooding in the Bayside area. The additional sewers not only bring combined sewage to the Alley Creek CSO Facility, but they also eliminate side slope erosion at the Oakland Ravine. The facility is located north of Northern Boulevard, and east of the Cross Island Parkway, in Bayside, Queens.

Along with the Alley Creek CSO Facility, DEP rehabilitated the Old Douglaston Pump Station to increase its capacity. The pump station is an existing facility that DEP upgraded to serve the new CSO retention facility by pumping the collected combined sewage from the storage tanks and sewers to the Tallman Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has the capacity to treat more than 80 million gallons of wastewater daily and serves a population of over 400,000 residents.

The Alley Creek CSO Facility is the newest of four combined sewer overflow retention tanks built in New York City. The Spring Creek CSO Facility went online in 1972 and can hold up to 20 million gallons of wastewater. The Flushing Bay CSO Facility went online in 2007 and can hold up to 43 million gallons of wastewater. And the Paerdegat Basin CSO Facility went into operation last week and is collecting 50 million gallons of stormwater each time it rains. Since 2002, DEP has spent approximately \$1.6 billion to reduce combined sewer overflows.

As part of the construction of the Alley Creek facility, DEP last year completed a \$20 million environmental restoration of the northern portion of Alley Pond Park in Bayside, Queens. The project, which restored wetlands and reintroduced local plant life to a 16-acre section of the park, was part of the overall effort to improve the ecology and water quality of Alley Creek as the restored wetlands will oxygenate the water and attract new animal species.

Alley Creek and Little Neck Bay, located in northern part of Queens are water bodies that are tidally connected to the East River. The water area of Alley Creek is approximately 62 acres.

DEP is planning \$1.1 billion in investments through 2019 to improve water quality by capturing overflows to improve harbor water quality. Since 2002, the City has invested more than \$7 billion to upgrade its 14 wastewater treatment plants. Because of these investments, DEP has achieved a number of milestones recently: reaching city-wide monthly average Clean Water Act secondary treatment standards for the first time ever – three years ahead of schedule; ending Federal probation and monitoring in December of 2009 that began in 2001; and agreeing to a historic nitrogen-reduction program for Jamaica Bay with the State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

To address the challenge of combined sewer overflows long term, last September, Mayor Bloomberg unveiled the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, which will improve harbor water quality by capturing and retaining stormwater runoff before it enters the sewer system. The plan, which includes \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure, will reduce sewer overflows by 40% by 2030. This approach will also save \$2.4 billion over the next 20 years because it will reduce more costly investments in traditional sewage retention projects, like tanks and tunnels. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other structural elements to absorb and evaporate water and to mimic natural areas and hydrologic cycles. These types of projects are a key component of PlaNYC's sustainability effort because they also shade and cool the city, improve air quality, and increase property values.

Clean harbor water and a CSO control plan are outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The new plan, the product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, builds on *PlaNYC*, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint for New York City. The plan is available on DEP's website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep).

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. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, and comprises 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. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) or follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater).

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