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DEP Completes Green Roof Installation at Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant

*Green Roof Will Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Help Prevent Combined Sewer Overflow
Discharges into Jamaica Bay*

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that DEP has completed the installation of a green roof at the Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant. The green roof has the ability to absorb up to 13,000 gallons of stormwater annually, which will reduce runoff as well as the likelihood and intensity of combined sewer overflow discharges into Jamaica Bay. During heavy storms, the sewer system often reaches capacity and must discharge a mixture of stormwater and wastewater—called a combined sewer overflow (CSO)—into the city’s surrounding waterways. Green roofs are a component of the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan, which calls for investing \$2.4 billion over the next 20 years in green infrastructure to help reduce combined sewer overflows. The green roof combines an engineered drainage system with natural vegetation that can be seen from the Skytrain at John F. Kennedy International Airport, and was installed as part of DEP’s plan for the facility to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

“Green infrastructure is one of the most effective ways to preserve Jamaica Bay for generations to come,” said Commissioner Strickland. “This green roof will capture thousands of gallons during storms, preventing the same amount of untreated wastewater from flowing into the largest urban wildlife refuge in the country. Along with other recent measures such as wetlands, eelgrass, and oyster bed restoration, as well as investments in nitrogen reduction technology, this green roof will help preserve this national treasure while also beautifying a vital treatment facility that protects the environment from 80 million gallons of wastewater every day.”

Green roofs absorb and retain large amounts of rainfall, and are a crucial means of on-site stormwater control. The plantings at the Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant are grown in a specially-designed soil which sits on a drainage layer, absorbing rainfall and slowing runoff into the sewer system before it discharges into Jamaica Bay. The sedum plants, a hardy species chosen for its low maintenance needs and ability to withstand drought, include white stonecrop, mountain sedum, tasteless stonecrop, and orange stonecrop. The green roof will also reduce the building’s absorption of ultraviolet light and improve insulation, cooling the interior and increasing energy efficiency.

The Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant initially went into operation in 1903 and serves more than 700,000 residents. Located in southern Queens, it treats an average of 80 million gallons of wastewater a day, and up to 200 million gallons during wet weather events. New Yorkers produce, and DEP treats, an average of 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day. The

wastewater is collected through 7,400 miles of lateral sewers that flow downhill by gravity or pumping into large interceptor sewers, which lead directly to the city's 14 wastewater treatment plants.

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. DEP has a staff of nearly 6,000 employees, including approximately 1,000 people who live and work in the watershed communities upstate. In addition, DEP's capital plan is responsible for more than 4,000 construction jobs annually over the next five years. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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