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DEP Joins Council Member Costa Constantinides to Distribute Rain Barrels in Queens



Queens Rain Barrel Giveaway with Council Member Costa Constantinides
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Rain Barrels Collect Precipitation, Reduce Residential Water Bills and Help to Protect the Health of Flushing Bay and the East River

Photos of the Event are Available on [DEP's Flickr page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Saturday joined Council Member Costa Constantinides to distribute rain barrels to approximately 100 homeowners in the Astoria, Jackson Heights, Woodside, and East Elmhurst neighborhoods of Queens. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner's water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of local waterways, including Flushing Bay and the East River. Last year, DEP distributed a record-setting 11,111 rain barrels to New York City homeowners. Saturday's event was held at Chappetto Square in Astoria and the rain barrels were provided free of charge.

"These environmentally-friendly rain barrels are a great way to promote sustainability while also helping homeowners conserve water and save money," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "Additionally, harvesting the stormwater that falls on your home's roof eases the pressure placed on the city's sewer infrastructure during rain events, which helps to reduce street flooding and

More Information

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improve the health of Flushing Bay and the East River. I'd like to thank Council Member Constantinides for his partnership with this giveaway event.”

“I was happy to see so many residents pick up rain barrels during our giveaway. The continued enthusiasm for rain barrels shows that our community is dedicated to conserving water, forming sustainable habits, and helping to reduce flooding,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council’s Environmental Committee**. “Astorians know that rain barrels help save money on water bills while protecting the health of our waterways. Thank you to DEP and Acting Commissioner Sapienza for their partnership on this successful giveaway.”

DEP’s Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City’s Green Infrastructure Plan that aims to capture stormwater before it can ever enter the sewer system and thereby reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. DEP has committed to invest \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls, such as rain barrels, to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows by 2030.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP’s efforts to conserve water as part of a \$1 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of this initiative, DEP has begun a project to repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that supplies roughly half of the city’s daily drinking water. In order to complete these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down in 2022. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent.

In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP is installing activation buttons on spray showers at 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. Work is also underway to install new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. And, DEP has partnered with hotels, restaurants and hospitals across the city to reduce water use at these facilities by five percent annually.

Installation of rain barrels is easy and they require little maintenance. Each homeowner who received a rain barrel on Saturday was provided with an installation kit and instructions. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$20.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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