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DEP Opens New Microbiology Lab at Newtown Creek Plant

New Facility Will Streamline and Enhance Operations of Harbor Water Quality Monitoring

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the opening of a new \$2.3 million microbiology laboratory that will improve operational efficiency and enhance monitoring of local waterways. The lab will consolidate bacteriological analyses for all 14 New York City wastewater treatment plants, increase DEP's ability to compare test results across its facilities, and help achieve the highest levels of pollutant removal and disinfection from the 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater that New Yorkers produce every day. The new lab will also allow for a significant increase in the number of water samples that can be analyzed with existing staff.

"One of our core responsibilities is to make sure that wastewater is effectively treated, so that it has as little impact on our receiving waterways as possible," said Commissioner Holloway. "This new microbiology lab will substantially increase our monitoring and testing capacity, giving us the vital information we need to meet and exceed treatment standards, and continue the resurgence of New York City's waterways that is central to Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC vision."

The new lab, located at Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Brooklyn, will streamline testing procedures and optimize quality control. Until now, testing was individually performed at the City's 14 wastewater treatment plants by certified operators. Now, existing staff that has been relocated to the new lab will be able to analyze multiple samples at once, greatly increasing the number of analyses that can be performed daily. Beginning this summer, DEP will also begin to take additional bacteriological samples each month within Jamaica Bay to assess water quality. In addition, DEP will monitor several tributaries to evaluate ambient improvements resulting from combined sewer overflow retention investments.

The lab will also allow DEP microbiologists to more efficiently monitor microorganisms at the wastewater

MORE INFORMATION

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treatment plants to ensure that all regulatory requirements are effectively met. The 2,000 square-foot microbiology lab includes modern equipment such as incubators, sterilizers, purification systems, balances, conductivity meters, and colony counters. Microscopes with video displays tied to computers will be used to capture and magnify images.

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. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses, and 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-City treatment plants.

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