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## **DEP Expands Leak Notification Program to Include Large Residential Buildings**

*First Year of Program To Detect Unknown Leaks by Monitoring Spikes in Water Usage  
Saved An Estimated \$10 Million for More Than 12,000 Customers*

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced the expansion of DEP's highly successful Leak Notification Program to include large residential building owners. The expanded Leak Notification Program will proactively notify large building owners of potential leaks and enable the owners and managers to quickly respond to and fix them before they become a costly problem. When the initial program was launched in March 2011 by Mayor Bloomberg, more than 600,000 customers—owners of single-family and two- or three-family homes—were eligible to receive notifications of potential leaks by signing up for email alerts at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). Since the program's inception, more than 12,000 leak detection notices have been sent to DEP customers, alerting them to significant increases in their daily water use that may indicate a leak. The new expanded program adds more than 100,000 customers, including four-family homes and large residential properties such as cooperative and condominium buildings. This program is made possible by the city's \$252 million investment in wireless meter readers, which provides DEP with water consumption data four times per day for smaller properties and hourly for larger ones.

"The Leak Notification Program that Mayor Bloomberg launched last year is already saving hard-earned dollars for our customers," said Commissioner Strickland. "Since starting the program, more than 12,000 customers have saved an estimated \$10 million in otherwise wasted water or even damaging leaks. By expanding the program, large building owners will now be able to take advantage of our state-of-the-art technology to better manage their bills and save money by addressing costly leaks quicker. DEP will continue to develop new applications for wireless meter reading to help New Yorkers save time, money and aggravation, as part of the city's commitment to using technology to make government more efficient, cost-effective and customer-friendly."

Now all residential DEP customers with a wireless meter reader are eligible for the Leak Notification Program. To ensure the program is tailored to the needs of larger buildings, owners of these types of properties can customize at what threshold of increased water use they would like to receive an email alert from DEP by visiting [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) and registering their My DEP Account. My DEP Account is a quick and easy way for customers to view their water consumption and pay their bills online. DEP launched its My DEP Account service in 2010 and has seen over 140,000 customers sign up since then to track their water consumption online. DEP plans to allow customers to receive leak alerts on their smartphones as well later this year.

Water customers with wireless water meter readers can track their water usage online. Approximately 788,000 customers are currently using wireless meters – 94 percent of all water customers. New York City will be the largest city in the world to use wireless water meter readers once the system has been fully installed across all five boroughs. The wireless Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system consists of small, low-power radio transmitters connected to individual water meters that send readings every six hours to a network of rooftop receivers throughout the City. The system is powered by the New York City Wireless Network (NYCWiN), maintained by the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications. Customers with wireless meter readers, can sign up to view their bills in real time at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). AMR customers with wireless water meter readers using the online tracking tool will be able to see the dollar value of the water they have used as they use it, and view past billing and payment history. Most customers connected to the wireless network receive meter readings four times per day, with certain large buildings receiving information hourly.

The leak notification program is DEP's most recent customer service initiative. In November 2010, New York City and DEP launched a paperless billing option for water and sewer bills. Water and sewer customers can now sign up to receive their quarterly bills electronically, instead of by mail. Over 35,000 customers have signed up for paperless billing. The new program reduces printing and mailing costs, and offers an easy-to-use and sustainable way for DEP's 836,000 customers to stay current on their accounts.

The receipt of an email from DEP as a part of the Leak Notification Program does not necessarily mean that the building has a leak. Sudden increases in water use could be triggered by a number of other factors, such as lawn-watering, entertaining guests, or shifts in the level of building occupancy. If customers do not believe their water consumption has significantly changed recently and that they may have an internal leak, DEP advises customers to first review their water use and check for discrepancies by going to [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). After confirming suspicious levels of water consumption, customers should do the following:

- Check toilets by looking for water movement in the bowl and the tank. Put a drop of food coloring in the tank and watch for the color to show up in the bowl – if it does, you have a slight leak;
- If you have water-using fixtures such as refrigerators, air conditioning units, or lawn sprinklers, check to ensure that they are turned off securely when not in use;
- Check any outside hose connection to ensure it is not leaking;
- Check your water meter. Read the dial and identify the “sweep hand” or small triangle that moves like a second hand on a watch. If it is moving and no one is actually using water, you may have a leak; and
- If you discover a leak, you should contact a licensed plumber for repair service.

The Leak Notification Program is part of DEP's *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 plan, the product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, builds on PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg's comprehensive sustainability blueprint for New York City.

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. 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 and 95 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. DEP has a robust capital program with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater) , or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](http://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

**Contact:** Farrell Sklerov/ Angel Román (718) 595-6600