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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Public Meeting at DEP Police 2nd Precinct in Beerston****Meeting to Lead to Better Understanding Between DEP Police and Local Residents**

Commissioner Christopher O. Ward of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced today that the DEP will hold a public meeting at the DEP Police's new precinct house in Beerston, Town of Walton, Delaware County, on March 10 at 11:00 A.M.

"This is a great chance for Delaware County residents to become more familiar with the DEP Police, our mission and our people," said Commissioner Ward. "At the same time, we welcome the opportunity to learn more about the concerns of local residents and ways that we can serve them better. There is no overriding agenda for the meeting – the purpose is to get to know the local people who the DEP Police are sworn to protect, and to help them get to know us."

Police Chief Ed Welch will be on hand, as will representatives from the Detective Bureau, Intelligence Division, Canine Unit, Emergency Services Unit, Scuba Unit and Special Operations Division assigned to the 2nd Precinct in Beerston.

The DEP Police has over 200 environmental police officers serving in New York City and nine watershed counties. Charged primarily with protecting the water supply that nine million New Yorkers rely on every day, the DEP Police also supplement local police agencies in their day-to-day activities of community service and public protection.

In 2003 alone, DEP Police were called upon over 250 times to assist other police agencies in the City's watershed. They also responded to over 300 traffic accidents and aided in 97 incidents where medical assistance was necessary. This was in addition to almost 700 environmental complaints they investigated while performing their main duties of protecting the water supply that half the state depends on every day.

The DEP opened a new precinct and a new police training center in Beerston in December 2003. The Stephen J. King Environmental Police Training Facility is the first of its kind in the nation to focus on the environmental policing and

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infrastructure protection issues which are unique to the New York City water supply. The center includes classrooms, a woodland studies area, an environmental investigations practical training field, environmental staging areas, wilderness trails, an off-road emergency vehicle operators course and police firing ranges. The facility will also be available for practical exercises for local, state and federal emergency first responders.