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Fall Foliage

Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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Statement from NYS Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens and NYC Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway On Today's Activation of the Ashokan Release Channel

"Earlier today, after close consultation with and agreement from Ulster County, the State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Department of Health, and the Environmental Protection Agency, DEP activated the Ashokan Reservoir Release Channel for up to one week," said Commissioner Holloway. "Activating the release channel will increase the reservoir's ability to capture runoff from intense storms by creating a void in the west basin of the reservoir ahead of tonight's forecasted storm, providing enhanced flood protection for communities south of the Ashokan Reservoir along the lower Esopus Creek. This action, which reduces the amount of spillage from the more turbid west basin into the higher quality east basin, will also help protect the drinking water of approximately 160,000 residents of towns that rely on the Catskill Aqueduct such as New Paltz and High Falls in Ulster County; New Windsor and Cornwall in Orange County; several towns in Westchester County, including Yorktown and Ossining; as well as the residents of New York City."

"We concur that activation of the Ashokan diversion channel is appropriate at this time to limit adverse flooding in communities along the Lower Esopus Creek and reduce turbidity in water flowing toward the New York City drinking water system," said Joe Martens, DEC Commissioner. "Flood 'action levels' in the Lower Esopus will be actively monitored and adjustments to the diversion channel output will be made as needed."

The latest information from the National Weather Service on the coming storm indicates that the reservoir could spill, increasing the potential for flooding in the lower Esopus. The action agreed to today will release up to 600 million gallons per day from the Ashokan Reservoir for the next week, depending on existing flows in the lower Esopus Creek. These releases will be discontinued if the stream gage on the lower Esopus Creek located at Mt. Marion is within one foot of flood action stage (18 feet) and the

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National Weather Service forecasts potential flooding. This is the first activation of the Ashokan Reservoir release since February 1, 2011.

The release channel is a concrete canal used to convey water released in a controlled manner from the reservoir through the upper and lower gate chambers to the Little Beaverkill stream and the lower Esopus Creek. Located in Ulster County, the Ashokan Reservoir is approximately 13 miles west of Kingston and 73 miles north of New York City. It was formed by the damming of the Esopus Creek, which eventually flows northeast and drains into the Hudson River. The reservoir holds 127.9 billion gallons at full capacity and was opened in 1915.

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, and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. New York City's water is delivered from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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