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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

06-10

February 28, 2006

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New Rain-Based Spill Control Program at Pepacton and Neversink Reservoirs

Commissioner Emily Lloyd of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today detailed a new spill control program for the Pepacton and Neversink reservoirs that is based on potential runoff from rainfall. The new program is in addition to the existing snow pack program at the same two reservoirs.

Under the new program, voids will be maintained in both reservoirs large enough to completely capture the expected runoff from a one-inch rain storm occurring over a six hour period. With both the runoff and snow pack programs in effect at the same time, the program that would create the larger void would take precedence.

"This new rainfall program provides an extra layer of protection for downstream residents for times when the snow pack is low, as it is this winter," said Commissioner Lloyd. "Instead of basing voids only on snow pack we now have the ability to use projected runoff from a defined weather event. The DEP crafted this program out of concern about downstream locales and was able to gain the approval of all the parties to the 1954 Supreme Court decree for its implementation."

Runoff projections are continuously updated for both reservoirs by the National Weather Service. Both the snow pack and runoff programs will be maintained until March 31.

Assembly Member Aileen Gunther (98th Assembly District) said, "This release program is a positive step to minimize the tragic flooding that occurs downstream of the Neversink Dam. The next step is to extend and expand this program. Additionally, I am working on legislation that would enable federal water management experts to look at the process in place and make recommendations on how New York City's reservoir system can be operated to minimize the horrendous impact of seasonal flooding in the Catskills region."

Under the snow pack program, voids are maintained in the Pepacton and Neversink reservoirs equal to the water equivalent of half the melted snow pack surrounding each reservoir. The National Weather Service, DEP and the State

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DEC all help to estimate the water equivalent of the melted snow packs.

Release rates are established daily in consultation with the Delaware River Master, and restrictions on the runoff program are the same as for the snow pack program. Releases will be suspended when downstream flood gauges reach two feet below flood stage or are projected to reach that point within 48 hours. Ice conditions in flood prone areas can also cause releases to be halted. Releases will also be suspended if the spill plus the releases from the Neversink Reservoir exceed 750 cubic feet per second (cfs), or 2000 cfs from Pepacton. These guidelines are subject to modification based on conditions.

The flood stage for the East Branch of the Delaware River is 13 feet as measured by the gauging station at Fishs Eddy. Flood stage for the Neversink River at Bridgeville is 8 feet.

Releases from the City's Delaware River reservoirs are directed by Delaware River Master in accordance with a 1954 Supreme Court decree. Releases can also be dictated by the DEC in accordance with the DRBC experimental fisheries program. The DEP cannot take unilateral action to increase or decrease the downstream releases from the City's Delaware River reservoirs and must secure the approval of all the Delaware River states for any release modifications.