

Home

Customer Services

› Pay Online

› Ways to Pay Your Bill

› eBilling

› Account Information

› Customer Assistance

› Service Line Protection Program

› Water Rates

› Property Managers & Trade Professionals

Water Utilities

› Drinking Water

› Wastewater

› Stormwater

› Harbor Water

› Long Term Control Plan

The Watershed

› Watershed Protection

› Watershed Recreation

Citywide Initiatives

› Regulatory Reform

› Environmental Education

› Conservation Programs

› Air Pollution Control

› Noise Codes & Complaints

Business and Professionals

› Forms & Permits

› Support for Businesses

› Doing Business with DEP

› Asbestos Abatement

› Construction, Demolition & Abatement

About DEP

› Inside DEP

› News

DEP Featured In...

Stories from DEP

Press Releases



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Department of Environmental Protection Joins Senator Leroy Comrie to Distribute Rain Barrels to 240 Homeowners in St. Albans

Rain Barrels Collect Precipitation, Reduce Residential Water Bills and Help to Protect the Health of Jamaica Bay
Photos of the Event are Available on [DEP’s Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Saturday joined New York State Senator Leroy Comrie to distribute rain barrels to approximately 240 homeowners in the St. Albans neighborhood. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner’s downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner’s water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household’s water use during the summer months. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City’s sewer system, which helps to protect the health of Jamaica Bay. Since 2008, DEP has distributed more than 3,500 rain barrels to New York City homeowners. Saturday’s event was held at Roy Wilkins Park and the rain barrels were provided free of charge.

“Rain barrels are a simple and effective way for homeowners to conserve water and save money,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “By capturing stormwater, the rain barrels will also ease pressure on the City’s sewer system and help to improve the health of Jamaica Bay.”

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Public Notices

Testimony & Public Comments

» Capital Projects

» Careers at DEP

» Environmental Reviews

» Interagency MOUs

» A to Z Index

» Contact Us

"I'd like to thank Commissioner Lloyd and her staff for working collaboratively with my office to provide this important, practical resource to Southeast Queens," said **NYS Senator Leroy Comrie**. "I would also like to thank the Southern Queens Park Association for hosting the event as well as the NYPD Explorers and all of the volunteers who helped distribute the rain barrels. With the high water table in many areas of our community, it is critical that we employ strategies that will help mitigate excessive water flowing into our sewers and catch basins. Additionally, rain barrels provide a cost cutting measure allowing for the recycling of water, providing some much needed financial relief to homeowners. I am proud to have been able to participate in the rain barrel program in my previous capacity as a City Council Member, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with Commissioner Lloyd and my colleagues in government, to do even more as the State Senator."

DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City's Green Infrastructure Plan that aims to capture stormwater before it can ever enter the sewer system and thereby reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. DEP has committed to invest \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls, such as rain barrels, to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows by 2030.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP's efforts to conserve water as part of a \$1.5 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of this initiative, DEP has begun a project to repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that supplies roughly half of the city's daily drinking water. In order to complete these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down in 2022. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent.

To further reduce the use of water in residential properties, DEP has initiated a \$23 million High Efficiency Toilet Replacement Program that will replace inefficient toilets in select residential properties across the five boroughs and save 10 million gallons of water each day. In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP is installing activation buttons on spray showers at 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. DEP is also installing new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. And, in the first public/private partnership, the Hotel Association of New York City has partnered with DEP to reduce water use at some of its premier hotels by five percent annually.

Installation of rain barrels is easy and they require little maintenance. Each homeowner who received a rain barrel on Saturday was provided with an installation kit and instructions. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

DEP manages New York 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow

customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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