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CONTACT:

[depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:depressoffice@dep.nyc.gov), (718) 595-6600

## Department of Environmental Protection Commissions Three New Marine Cargo Ships

**Recipient of One of the Largest Federal Stimulus Grants in the Country, New Ships Will Help to Protect the Health of Local Waterways for Decades to Come**

**Shallower, More Maneuverable Ships Allow for the Demolition of a Storage Tank in Greenpoint to Make Way for a Park and Affordable Housing**

**Photos of the New Ships and Commissioning are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)**

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd on Tuesday announced the arrival of three new, state of the art cargo vessels that will play a critical role in the wastewater treatment process and help to protect the health of New York City's local waterways for decades to come. Construction of the three ships, the Hunt's Point, the Port Richmond and the Rockaway, was partly financed through a \$53 million federal stimulus grant provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The three new ships are equipped with the latest marine technology, have a greater cargo capacity and more versatility than the older models, including a shallower draft, which allows them to navigate under the Pulaski Bridge and into Whale Creek, where they can dock directly adjacent to the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. This versatility has allowed DEP to dismantle an 800,000 gallon storage tank along the shore of the East River in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. That land will be used to develop new affordable housing and expand

**More Information**

NYC Department of  
Environmental Protection  
Public Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373  
(718) 595-6600

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Newtown Barge Park. The ships burn ultra-low sulfur diesel and meet stringent EPA Tier II emissions standards. In addition, because the ships have a greater cargo capacity, they can make fewer trips and burn less fuel, which will help to reduce greenhouse gases. Together, the three new ships cost \$106 million. In addition to the \$53 million in ARRA funding, it is anticipated that the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation will provide a short-term loan to help pay the remaining costs of the new sludge vessels. The new ships were commissioned on Tuesday at a ceremony at the Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in Manhattan.

“I’d like to thank New York City’s entire congressional delegation for their commitment to securing essential federal support for local clean water projects, such as these three new sludge vessels,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “The new ships run cleaner and more efficiently than the older models, have a greater cargo capacity and will be more reliable. In addition, they will allow us to free up waterfront property in Greenpoint for an expanded park and affordable housing.”

“The health and safety of our local community is of the utmost importance and the commissioning of these state-of-the-art cargo vessels contributes to exactly that,” said **Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol**. “By utilizing these vessels, the removal of sludge from the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant will be done more efficiently and in a way that protects our local waterways and communities. The removal of the sludge tank also means that Greenpoint will be getting much needed and much deserved green space and affordable housing. Thanks to New York City DEP Commissioner Lloyd and the federal government for their dedication to Greenpoint’s environment. There is no question that these marine cargo ships will help make a better and greener Greenpoint.”

Sludge vessels have been a part of the City’s wastewater treatment system since the late 1930s and the Federal Work Projects Administration funded the first three motorized sludge vessels. Today, DEP operates a fleet of sludge vessels that transport nearly 1.2 billion gallons of sludge each year. The three new ships join the *North River*, which went into service in 1974, and the *Red Hook*, which went into service in 2008. The *Newtown Creek*, which went into service in 1967, was recently retired and will be sold at auction. Sludge is the residual organic material that is removed from wastewater, and dewatering the sludge is the final step in the treatment process. Eight of New York City’s 14 wastewater treatment plants have dewatering facilities and six do not. The sludge vessels transport liquid sludge from the six plants not served by onsite dewatering facilities to those equipped with the infrastructure to complete the process.

In 2009, DEP was awarded one of the largest ARRA grants in the country and Bollinger Marine Fabricators in Amelia, Louisiana was awarded a contract to build the new sludge vessels. Over the last few months, as each ship was completed and passed its sea trials, they sailed from Louisiana, around the tip of Florida and up the east coast to New York City. The vessels then went through a post-delivery inspection and adjustments at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The sludge vessels operate seven days a week and each has a six person crew, including a captain, chief engineer, assistant engineer, mate and two mariners. The new ships are 290 feet long, 70 feet wide and have the capacity to transport 140,000 cubic feet of sludge, or roughly 1 million gallons. The new ships weigh 2,872 tons and are designed to travel at 10 knots, or approximately 11.5 miles per hour. On a typical week, each vessel makes 14 round trips and visits eight wastewater treatment plants.

Located throughout the city, DEP operates 14 wastewater treatment plants that clean and disinfect more than 1 billion gallons of wastewater to Federal Clean Water Act standards every day. At the plants, the wastewater undergoes five major physical and biological processes that closely duplicate how water is purified in nature. One of the byproducts of these processes is sludge. The raw sludge is placed in an oxygen-free environment and is heated to at least 95 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 to 20 days. This stimulates the growth of anaerobic

bacteria, which consume the organic material in the sludge. The digestion process stabilizes the thickened sludge by converting much of the material into water, carbon dioxide and biogas. The “digested” sludge is then transported by sludge vessels to a dewatering facility where it is put through centrifuges, which remove much of the remaining water. The resulting material is then either composted, limed, or heat dried before it is land applied, consistent with Federal and receiving-site requirements.

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. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. 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 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](http://nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nycwater](https://facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/nycwater](https://twitter.com/nycwater).

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