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DEP Joins Council Member Steven Matteo and Assemblyman Michael Cusick to Distribute Rain Barrels to More than 200 Staten Island Homeowners



Rain Barrels Collect Precipitation, Reduce Residential Water Bills and Help to Protect the Health of Borough's Waterways

[A Photo from the Event is Available on DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Saturday joined New York City Council Member Steven Matteo and New York State Assemblyman Michael Cusick to distribute rain barrels to approximately 210 Staten Island homeowners from the borough's Mid-Island neighborhoods. 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 reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of local waterways. Over the last several years, DEP has distributed more than 5,500 rain barrels to New York City homeowners. Saturday's event was held at the College of Staten Island in Willowbrook and the rain barrels were provided free of charge.

"Rain barrels are an environmentally-friendly way for Staten Island homeowners to conserve water, save money, and help to reduce street flooding," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Steven Lawitts**. "Collecting rainwater also eases pressure on the City's sewer infrastructure and helps protect the borough's

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award-winning Bluebelts, a vital piece of wetland preservation that effectively manages stormwater for approximately one third of Staten Island's land area."

"Rain barrels are a very simple, inexpensive way to conserve water and limit runoff, which gives our sewer infrastructure and Bluebelt system more capacity to handle the frequent flooding in our communities. I am happy to have co-sponsored this weekend's successful rain barrel giveaway event at CSI with my colleague, Assemblyman Michael Cusick, and I looking forward to supporting many others in the future," said **City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo**.

"Thanks to the partnership between DEP, Councilman Matteo, and myself, more than 200 Staten Island families now have rain barrels to capture stormwater for use in their gardens & lawns, easing the burden on our water system and saving money in the process. I want to thank everyone for participating, and encourage anyone who could not make it to look out for our next giveaway in the near future," said **Assemblyman Michael Cusick**.

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.

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. Work is also underway to install new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. And, DEP has partnered with hotels, restaurants and hospitals across the city to reduce water use at these facilities 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](#).