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DEP Completes Project to Improve Water Quality in Kill Van Kull

More than Five Million Gallon Reduction in Combined Sewer Overflows During Storms

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the activation of a new throttling gate at Staten Island's Port Richmond Wastewater Treatment Plant that will help improve water quality in Kill Van Kull. The gate will shut during severe weather allowing the existing sewer line to store excess stormwater and sewage. Once the severe weather subsides, untreated wastewater will be pumped to the Port Richmond plant for treatment. The nearly $8 million investment will reduce combined sewer overflow discharges into Kill Van Kull by up to 5.6 million gallons during heavy rainfall, and an average of 30 million gallons per year.

"This project is a great example of Mayor Bloomberg's commitment to improve water quality, and our efforts make the best use of our existing infrastructure," said Commissioner Holloway. "Innovative, cost-effective investments like this reduce the need for massive projects that have put tremendous pressure on water rates. The completion of this project, along with other investments we have made around the city, will mean that our harbors – which are the cleanest they have ever been in 100 years – will get even better."

"On behalf of the people of Staten Island, I applaud DEP for improving the water quality in the Kill van Kull," said Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro. "This project will help the environment while increasing waterfront and recreational opportunities for our residents. Treatment of our city's wastewater has more than doubled in recent years and it won't be long before we reach 100%. I congratulate DEP for their hard work in not only upgrading our plants and sewers, but providing New York City with the nation's best-tasting tap water."

The nearly $8 million investment at the Port Richmond plant consists of a throttling gate that has been built inside an existing sewer interceptor that will be operated during wet weather. When this happens, operators will shut the gate, allowing the interceptor to serve as a holding tank and

MORE INFORMATION

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preventing untreated sewage and stormwater from being released into the harbor. After the storm subsides, the operators at the Port Richmond plant will then pump the stored wastewater into the plant for treatment before it is safely discharged into the surrounding water. The throttling gate also helps with the removal of floatable materials that otherwise could have ended up in the waterways. Since 2002, the City has invested more than $5 billion upgrading wastewater treatment plants plus nearly $1 billion in overflow reduction programs to help improve New York City's harbor water quality.

New Yorkers produce, and DEP treats, more than 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day. The wastewater is collected through 7,400 miles of lateral sewers that flow downhill into large interceptor sewers, which lead directly to the City's 14 wastewater treatment plants. These plants have plenty of capacity to handle New York City's wastewater on a "dry weather" day, and are designed with a capacity of double dry weather flows. Two-thirds of New York City has a combined sewer system that collects wastewater and stormwater runoff together in the same pipe from properties and streets. This sometimes presents an issue during rainstorms when treatment plants reach their capacity. To relieve the sewage system during these high-flow periods, the interceptor sewers have "regulators" equipped with overflows weirs that divert combined stormwater and wastewater into New York City's surrounding waterways. This is known as a combined sewer overflow. Upgrades to New York City's plants and sewers have allowed for the capture of a greater amount of overall flow, from about 30% in the 1980s to over 72% today; and overflows are more dilute, with the percentage of sanitary waste decreasing from 30% to about 12% today.

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 a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes.

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