



Fall Foliage

Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from NYC Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway On End of Turbid Water Releases from the Ashokan Reservoir

“The decision to end turbid releases through the Ashokan Release Channel has always been based on our best available water quality data and modeling. Operational decisions like this directly impact the drinking water of nine million New Yorkers, including one million residents north of New York City. In the past two weeks during our routine analysis of conditions in the Ashokan Reservoir, water quality has improved faster than we expected when we committed to ending turbid releases by February 13. Based on new modeling which has taken this into account, we have concluded that we can immediately end turbid water releases from the West Basin of the Ashokan Reservoir and initiate clear water releases from the East Basin to flush out turbidity in the Lower Esopus. Starting today, clear water is now flowing through the release channel and will continue for approximately three days, for a total release of 1.5 billion gallons—which is equivalent to three times the volume of water in the lower Esopus Creek.

Throughout this operation, DEP has worked hard to balance the need to maintain drinking water quality for nearly half of New York State, and at the same time protect tributaries, like the Lower Esopus, that are critical elements of the water system and are part of the daily life of the communities that live near and rely on these waterways. Going forward, DEP is committed to assessing and addressing any impacts of the latest releases, and to taking the steps necessary to minimize the need for these kinds of releases in the future. Two capital projects already underway—the Croton Water Filtration Plant and the Catskill/Delaware Interconnect Tunnel, which cost more than \$3 billion combined—will provide alternative water sources for the city in the coming years and essentially eliminate our need to use the release channel to make highly turbid releases. In addition, we will consistently engage our regulatory partners, the people of Ulster County, and other stakeholders when events arise that could increase turbidity in the water system, and better detail how DEP plans to address it.”

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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. 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. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP also manages storm water throughout the city, and ensures that the city's facilities comply with the Clean Water Act, and other federal, state and local rules and regulations. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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