

Commissioner's Corner



I am thrilled to kick off 2018 by sharing some great news with all of you—DEP has received a 10-year waiver to continue delivering unfiltered drinking water from its Catskill and Delaware water supply systems. The waiver, known as a Filtration Avoidance Determination (FAD), was released Thursday by the New York State Department of Health (DOH). The City

will commit an estimated \$1 billion over the next decade to comply with the FAD by administering programs that protect the upstate reservoirs and the vast watershed lands that surround them.

Over the past 25 years, the City's watershed protection programs have been praised as a worldwide model for protecting the quality of drinking water at its source. These efforts, paired with a robust program of water quality testing and infrastructure improvements, have allowed the City to avoid the construction of a costly filtration plant for its Catskill and Delaware supplies. Such a facility is estimated to cost more than \$10 billion to construct, upwards of \$100 million to operate each year, and would be the largest public works project in the history of the City.

New York City's water supply is comprised of three distinct systems—Croton, Catskill, and Delaware. Their reservoirs work in concert to meet the demand of 8.5 million consumers in the five boroughs of New York City, and another 1 million people in four counties north of the City. The system delivers about 1.1 billion gallons of water each day.

The Catskill and Delaware systems comprise the largest unfiltered water supply in the United States, delivering about 90 percent of New York City's water on a typical day. Millions of laboratory tests in the City and the watershed show that water from these two systems continues to meet the stringent criteria to avoid filtration. The Croton System became a filtered supply in 2015. It supplies about 10 percent of the City's water.

For decades, the City has implemented a strategy of source-water protection to maintain the high quality of water in its reservoirs. The science-based programs in the FAD are rooted in the premise that it is most cost effective and environmentally sound to protect the quality of water at its natural source. A key element of New York City's success in watershed protection has been the development of strong relationships with watershed communities, locally based organizations, environmental groups, and federal, state, and local government agencies. While the watershed protection pro-

grams are fully funded by City water rate payers, most of them are administered by watershed-based entities that partner with DEP to protect the water supply from environmental degradation or potential sources of contamination.

Including the new FAD, the City has committed more than \$2.7 billion toward its watershed protection programs since 1993, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency first issued the City a waiver from the federal requirement to filter tap water that comes from surface sources such as reservoirs. A 1997 memorandum of agreement allowed the City to move ahead with three central components of source-water protection: acquisition of vacant land in the watershed to minimize pollution resulting from widespread development in areas near reservoirs and the streams that feed them; regulatory controls over new development to ensure building projects were protective of water quality; and a series of City-funded partnership programs to address existing and potential sources of water pollution. This multi-pronged approach has provided flexibility to counter evolving threats such as climate change, and the agility to reallocate resources after large storms or to meet other unforeseen needs.

The new FAD issued by DOH requires the City to continue to build upon its source-water protection

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Spotlight on Safety

EHS Reporting and Investigation Policy

The Office of Environmental, Health and Safety (OEHS) has developed a new Agency Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy. This policy outlines an agency-wide procedure for identifying, investigating, and documenting workplace incidents, near misses, and hazard identifications (unsafe conditions) in an effort to reduce unsafe events and prevent serious incidents. It applies to all DEP facilities, employees, and contractors. This new policy will be in effect on January 5, 2018.

To help reduce unsafe events and prevent serious incidents in the workplace, all employees should:

- immediately report incidents (including first aid cases), near misses and unsafe conditions to their supervisor or bureau EHS
- participate in investigations and provide requested information
- maintain the scene of an incident as is (if possible)
- provide the information necessary for entry into the Audit and Incident Information Management System database

For more information on the EHS Reporting and Investigation Policy [click here](#).

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.



(Commissioner's Corner... continued)

initiatives and achievements. It also requires some new or additional investments in the years ahead. They include:

- Expanding the small-business septic program in the west-of-Hudson watershed.
- Expediting the development of a community wastewater facility for the hamlet of Shokan near Ashokan Reservoir.
- The implementation of additional best-management practices on watershed farms.
- Protecting additional stream-side lands through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Streamside Acquisition Program.

- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will assemble a panel of experts to review New York City's source water protection programs. The expert panel is expected to begin its work in 2018.

The renewal of our filtration waiver underscores that New York City has some of the highest quality and best protected drinking water in the world. But protecting our water at its source in the Catskill Mountains does not happen by accident. New Yorkers owe their gratitude to the nonprofits, government agencies and other watershed-based partners who administer our watershed protection programs as we push toward



the common goal of protecting the largest municipal water supply in the United States.

I'd like to thank the Bureau of Water Supply, especially its staff who oversee our watershed protection programs, the Bureau of Legal Affairs, and our colleagues

from the city Law Department for all their efforts in negotiating the new FAD.

More information about the FAD can be found on the [DOH website](#). The press release announcing the FAD can be read [here](#).

DEP Employees Generously Donate Toys



DEP employees once again generously donated toys for needy children during this year's holiday season. At **Lefrak**, 611 toys were collected and given to the Coalition for the Homeless. The **Kingston** and **Shokan** locations collected toys, gifts, and gift cards that were presented to Christmas Wishes Ulster County, a not-for-profit organization that provides for hundreds of needy children/teens throughout Ulster County. Employees in the **Downsville Region** supported a "Santa's Helper" program sponsored by the Downsville Central School Alumni Association. Families in need provided "wish list" items that their children asked Santa for and participants then purchased those gifts. The toys donated through these collections most certainly brought smiles to children of all ages! Thank you to all who made donations, and to the bureau coordinators who helped make this a successful drive. [Click here](#) for photos of the various collections, and the list of coordinators and BWSO staff who helped collect and deliver toys.

Holiday Party is a Lavish Affair



This year's DEP holiday party was held on Dec. 20 at Russo's On The Bay in Howard Beach, Queens. The approximately 250 people in attendance had a blast at the fun-filled gala organized by agency staff and the Quality of Work Life Committee. Labor and management once again came together to make this lavish event possible. The celebration began with brief remarks from the agency's Chief Financial Officer Joseph Murin. Attendees, including current and former employees, retirees, family and friends, then danced the night away. Special thanks to the Executive Senior Staff for contributing to the lovely floral arrangements, Renee Alfieri (OD&HR Director of Employee Engagement) and Kyle Simmons (President, Local 924), who were the Co-Chairs of the holiday party, and their team of committee members, including Ava George, Marcia Jones, Lenora Smith, and Sandra Thompson-Reid. We recognize everyone that supported this important year-end employee engagement event. Photos of the night's festivities can be seen [here](#).

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.