

## Commissioner's Corner



Yesterday I joined **Mayor de Blasio** as he announced that he would end the rental payment from the New York City Water Board (Board) to the City, saving \$244 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 and \$268 million in FY 2018. The total savings from eliminating the rental payment will mean that every customer will realize nearly 7 percent in savings on their water and sewer bills through FY 2020.

Mayor de Blasio also proposed to issue a one-time \$183 credit to approximately 664,000 customers this summer from a portion of the rental savings in FY 2017. The proposed \$183 credit represents a nearly 17 percent savings on the annual water and sewer bills for a typical single-family homeowner. For approximately 150,000 homeowners who use less than 95 gallons of water per day and pay the minimum charge, the credit represents a nearly 40 percent savings on their annual water and sewer bills.

The \$183 credit will be applied to all one to three-family homes across the city:

- **Bronx:** 65,410
- **Brooklyn:** 204,756
- **Manhattan:** 6,279
- **Queens:** 277,495
- **Staten Island:** 110,462

As described in the lease between the City and the Board, the City may request an annual rental payment not to exceed 15 percent of the amount of principal and interest outstanding on the bonds of the Municipal Water Finance Authority. Every year since 1985, when the lease took effect, the mayor has exercised this discretion and requested the rental payment.

When Mayor de Blasio took office in 2014, he committed to eliminating the rental payment over a number of years in order to ensure that funds collected through water and sewer fees were dedicated solely to maintaining and improving the water and wastewater systems.

In 2015, he returned 40 percent of the rental payment while pledging to return an additional 10 percent each year until it was phased out. This year, as part of

DEP's FY 2017 water and sewer rate proposal, the Administration had promised to return 50 percent of the payment, or \$122 million. Yesterday, the Administration announced that it will not request any of the \$244 million rental payment available to it through the terms of the lease.

The \$183 credit, which must be approved by the Board, is on top of other proposed changes, including affordability programs for low-income homeowners and multi-family housing properties that are expected to benefit as many as 120,000 customers and 40,000 units, respectively. In addition, the proposal recommends

freezing the minimum charge at \$1.27 per day for the third consecutive year for the more than 150,000 customers who use fewer than 95 gallons of water per day, which a quarter of all single-family homeowners do.

The Board has scheduled five public hearings for the FY 2017 water rate proposal. Information on the hearings can be found by visiting [nyc.gov/waterboard](http://nyc.gov/waterboard). Following the five public hearings, the Water Board will consider and vote on the FY 2017 rates and bill credits on May 20, 2016, and the new rates will become effective on July 1, 2016. To learn more [click here](#).

## Spotlight on Safety

### OSHA National Safety Stand-Down/ NYC Construction Safety Week 2016

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) will hold its annual "National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction" next week, from May 2 through May 6. Simultaneously, the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB) will recognize Construction Safety Week by holding its "Build Safe Live Safe" conference on next Wednesday, May 4. The purpose of the National Safety Stand-Down is to raise awareness and prevent fall hazards in construction. Fatalities caused by falls from elevation continue to be a leading cause of death for construction workers, however these deaths are preventable.

In honor of Safety Stand-Down and Construction Safety week, DEP's Bureau of Engineering, Design and Construction (BEDC) will have an exhibition table at the "Build Safe Live Safe" conference, as they have in past years. There will be a safety 'communication-a-day' to coincide with all BEDC projects along with a poster. This year, BEDC is focusing on the themes of planning, teamwork, and looking out for each other's safety. Several BEDC contractors will also hold events at participating sites. To learn more about National Safety Stand-Down week events and how to participate, visit [OSHA's website](#).

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.



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## Out of the Archives

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Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza and Mount Prospect Water Tower photographed on April 21, 1912. Mount Prospect Reservoir was completed in 1858 to provide water coming from areas of Long Island to the highest parts of Brooklyn, and a tower was built in 1893 to improve water pressure. With the Catskill system in place by 1916, the tower was demolished in 1930 and the reservoir dismantled ten years later. See more photos of the tower and reservoir [here](#).

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## Trout Release

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Last week, DEP joined Trout Unlimited and several New York City students groups to release juvenile trout that the students raised in their classrooms into streams in Westchester County. The approximately 300 juvenile trout were released into the Cross River where it passes through the Wards Pound Ridge Reservation. The groups of students, who also planted 30 new trees along the banks of the river, included pre-Kindergarteners from both BronxWorks and the South Bronx Head Start Center, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from P.S. 84 in Brooklyn, and students from John Bowne High School in Queens. Since 2002, DEP and Trout Unlimited have worked to educate students in New York City and watershed communities about the importance of protecting our shared water resources through the Trout in the Classroom program. "The Trout in the Classroom program provides a tangible and practical way to educate young New Yorkers about the importance of preserving the rivers, streams, reservoirs, and lakes that supply the world class drinking water we enjoy every day," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. [Click here](#) for more information.

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## DEP In the News

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Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner **Emily Lloyd** and Brooklyn Borough President **Eric L. Adams** recognized Earth Day on Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, with the launch of their Adopt-A-Catch Basin pilot program, an initiative in which the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President and DEP will form partnerships with block associations, business improvement districts, and other community-based organizations to remove debris that blocks storm drains. DEP Commissioner Lloyd and Borough President Adams toured a portion of Canarsie, the neighborhood with the highest reports to 311 of blocked catch basins last year, and spoke about how Adopt-A-Catch Basin has the potential to make a big quality of life impact with minimal cost and effort. "Mayor de Blasio is committed to engaging local communities to help solve quality of life issues and I'm grateful for Borough President Adams' work in organizing the Adopt-A-Catch Basin pilot program in Brooklyn," said Commissioner Lloyd. For more information, [click here](#).

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## Welcome Aboard!

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Yesterday 23 new employees attended orientation and received an overview of the department from First Deputy Commissioner **Steve Lawitts** and Deputy Director for Human Resources Management **Herb Roth**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP.

**Frederick Gubitosi, Dianne Hewitt, Karina Mendoza, Michael Pinckney, Luis Rivera, Andrew Sokolowski, Cesar Velez IV, and Vonnie Verner** with BCS; **Douglas Auer** with Public Affairs; **Eric Boice, Joshua McGraw** and **Andrew Sokolowski** with BWS; **Salek Ahmed, Richard Campbell, Cynthia Chin-Myers, Anthony Martinez, Dharamraj Rajram, and Adriana Santana** with BWSO; **Michael Moreno, Yolanda Yanez-Porras** and **Lukas Zurawski** with BWT; **Christopher Brandfine** with CDBG; and **Tony Li** with Sustainability.

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**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**