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CONTACT:

Farrell Sklerov / Michael Saucier (718) 595-6600

**MORE INFORMATION**

NYC Department of  
Environmental Protection  
Communications &  
Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard  
19th Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

**Statement from NYC Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway On the Wards Island SHARON Facility Project Receiving the Grand Award in the American Council of Engineering Companies' 2011 Engineering Excellence Awards Competition**

"It's an honor for DEP to be recognized by the American Council of Engineering Companies for its SHARON project at Wards Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in Manhattan. ACEC is a critical voice for America's engineering industry and we are proud to be their partner in helping bring attention to a project that enhances our environment through cutting edge engineering work. By year end, the SHARON (Single Reactor System for High Ammonia Removal Over Nitrate) system will reduce nitrogen discharges into Long Island Sound by more than 10,000 pounds per day. The goal of all this work is to continue the dramatic improvements in water quality throughout New York Harbor, which is already at its best in more than a century. Improving our waterways and reconnecting New Yorkers to the city's more than 500 miles of waterfront is a key part of the city's comprehensive waterfront plan, a blueprint to reclaim New York City's standing as a premier waterfront city that was announced by Mayor Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn earlier this month. I'd like to thank DEP's Allen Deur, Keith Beckmann and their team in the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment for the hard work and analysis that went into the construction of this facility."

The SHARON (Single Reactor System for High Ammonia Removal Over Nitrate) process is a new technology to remove nitrogen from sewage. Though nitrogen is not harmful to public health, it can degrade the overall ecology of waterways by increasing algae growth and reducing oxygen levels that fish need to thrive. This new technology compresses the nitrogen removal process, produces a smaller carbon footprint than other methods, and requires less energy, which cuts costs. DEP has been evaluating cost-effective measures to remove nitrogen from sewage. In 2006, DEP contracted with Grontmij, a Dutch firm, to help design and construct the SHARON Process at the

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Wards Island plant to demonstrate this technology for the first time in North America. The SHARON process at Wards Island is now the largest in the Western Hemisphere and has the capability to treat up to 1.85 million gallons per day of centrate, which is the ammonia-rich byproduct of part of the wastewater treatment process.

The SHARON process is a critical part of DEP's overall program to reduce nitrogen from the six wastewater treatment plants that discharge into the East River and the Long Island Sound. Last August, DEP announced the operation of enhanced treatment measures to cut by 45% the amount of nitrogen being discharged into the East River at the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Bronx. DEP is investing an additional \$770 million in nitrogen reduction measures at Bowery Bay and the other two Upper East River wastewater treatment plants: Tallman Island and Wards Island. These projects are scheduled to be complete in 2012, and will reduce total nitrogen discharges into the East River by more than 52%. DEP also has a comprehensive program to reduce nitrogen in Jamaica Bay. Following a historic agreement reached by the city, the state and environmental stakeholders in 2010, DEP will install equipment and implement operational changes that will cut nitrogen discharges into the bay by nearly 50%.

Although it is not a pathogen and poses no risk to human beings, high levels of nitrogen can degrade the overall ecology of a waterway. They can lead to reduced levels of dissolved oxygen in waterways and excessive algae growth, especially in warm weather months.

The American Council of Engineering Companies' (ACEC) annual Engineering Excellence Awards competition recognizes engineering firms for projects that demonstrate a high degree of innovation, achievement, and value. For more than 43 years, engineering firms have entered their most innovative projects and studies in competitions conducted by state member organizations. Entries are accepted into one of 12 project categories: studies, research, and consulting engineering services; building/technology systems; structural systems; surveying and mapping technology; environmental; waste and storm water; water resources; transportation; special projects; small projects; energy; and industrial and manufacturing processes and facilities. A panel of 25-30 judges, possessing a vast array of industry expertise, is convened to critique and rank the projects. The panel evaluates submissions for engineering excellence, then selects 24 top award winners — 16 Honor Awards and eight Grand Awards. One Grand Conceptor Award will be selected from the eight Grand Award winners as the overall best engineering achievement.

Projects from all over the world are rated on the basis of: uniqueness and innovative applications; future value to the engineering profession and perception by the public; social, economic, and sustainable development considerations; complexity; and successful fulfillment of client/owner's needs, including schedule and budget. DEP received the award today at a ceremony in Washington, DC. More information on the award can be found at [www.acec.org](http://www.acec.org).

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. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) or follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater).

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