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Automatic Credit: Mayor Announces \$115 Water and Sewer Credit for Over 53,000 Homeowners

July 14, 2017

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced that more than 53,000 low-income homeowners are receiving an automatic \$115 credit on their water and sewer bill. In addition, the New York City Water Board has authorized the extension of the credit to approximately 12,000 additional senior citizens in FY18. The Water Board has also approved a new \$250 per residential unit credit, to begin next year, for multi-family buildings that meet certain affordability, conservation and performance criteria. The new Multifamily Affordable Housing Credit will provide a total of \$10 million of assistance to properties, serving as many as 40,000 units, while helping to incentivize affordability.

“We are putting water rate relief directly into the hands of low-income homeowners and senior citizens across the city,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Maintaining reasonable water and sewer rates is a key piece of the affordability puzzle for hard-working New York families.”

In 2015, the Home Water Assistance Program provided the first annual credit to 12,500 low-income homeowners who qualify for the federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). In 2016, the

program was expanded to also include low-income senior and disabled homeowners who receive a DOF property tax exemption. Beginning in FY18, the program will reach senior citizens with a combined annual income of less than \$50,000. DEP partners with HRA to identify qualified residents that receive a HEAP benefit, with DOF to identify customers with property tax exemptions, as well as HPD and HDC to identify eligible multi-family buildings that conserve water and enter into an agreement to keep rents affordable.

The \$115 credit will appear on the next water and sewer bill for the following customers:

Bronx: 4,717

Brooklyn: 16,659

Manhattan: 101

Queens: 23,149

Staten Island: 8,451

“In New York City we know that every drop of water counts, but we also know that every dollar counts,” said **DEP Acting Commissioner Sapienza**. “Over the last few years tens of thousands of low-income residents have benefitted from the Home Water Assistance Program and we are thrilled to now expand it to even more of our senior customers, while still keeping water and sewer rates affordable for all New Yorkers.”

“We are proud to work with the Department of Environmental Protection to extend this important benefit to eligible New Yorkers,” said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. “Programs like this and the Home Energy Assistance Program help seniors and other low income homeowners stay safely in their homes and communities.”

“The City is leaving no stone unturned in the effort to preserve and expand the stock of affordable housing across the city,” said **HPD Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer**. “This new Multi-Family Affordable Housing Credit will extend needed relief to owners struggling with rising operating costs, helping to safeguard the long-term affordability and health of their buildings. We are grateful to DEP Acting Commissioner Sapienza for his leadership in conserving our precious water supply while supporting programs to create a more affordable and sustainable future for our city.”

“The expansion of the water and sewer bill credit in addition to the new Multifamily Affordable Housing Credit will ease the financial burden for many older New Yorkers,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado**. “Seniors shouldn’t have to choose between maintaining the roof over their head and paying for other essentials.”

“This new credit for multi-family owners will both promote sustainability and affordability, addressing two of this administration’s key priorities,” said **HDC President Eric Enderlin**. “Water is one of the many costs of operating multi-family rental housing and this credit would provide a discount to owners who

conserve water and keep rents affordable for tenants. I want to thank Acting Commissioner Sapienza and his team at DEP for their partnership in finding creative solutions to tackle the city's affordable housing crisis."

"More than eight thousand Staten Islanders getting some money back in their pockets is really good news," noted **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo**. "For our residents, especially seniors on a fixed income, every little bit helps."

City Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council's Environmental Protection Committee, said, "The Home Water Assistance Program helps ensure that low-income and senior homeowners can afford to pay their water bill. I am proud that the program was expanded to include additional senior citizens this year. The Water Board's approval of a new water bill credit for homes that conserve water will help homeowners form sustainable habits. As we work to combat climate change, these innovative policies ensure that we can make a difference if we work together."

"I think the extension of the home water assistance program is wonderful news. Our seniors can benefit from any homeowner related credit during these economically challenging times. My understanding is that 23,149 residents in Queens alone will receive a water bill and sewer bill credit. Extending the Home Water Assistance program is a way to help our seniors and is long overdue. I applaud DEP for doing their part," said **State Senator James Sanders, Jr.**

"I am glad to see that many individuals will receive a \$115 credit on their water and sewer bill. While I believe more is needed to be done, it is a good first start for many who are struggling to pay bills," said **State Assembly Member Brian Barnwell**.

"My constituents have been encumbered for years with exorbitant water bills and fundamental changes to the system are required to keep rates within reason. This credit is a small token of relief, but a step in the right direction, and I hope they're excited as I am that it has been extended and will benefit over 8,000 Staten Islanders on their next water and sewer bills," said **Council Member Joseph Borelli**.

"Skyrocketing water and sewer bills are among the many cost of living expenses that are making home ownership in this city prohibitive for so many people, particularly for seniors on fixed income. We must do much more to ease the financial burden for homeowners, but this \$115 credit will certainly help," said **City Council Member Steven Matteo**.

"Water is obviously one of life's absolute essentials, yet for many low-income Queens homeowners the cost of something so basic can be a hardship," said **City Council Member Karen Koslowitz**. "I am so pleased that over 53,000 low income homeowners will receive an automatic \$115 credit on their water bill through the Home Water Assistance Program."

"Water and sewer bill increases are a frustrating fact of life for New Yorkers, so this year's credit to 53,000

low-income homeowners is a welcome reprieve,” said **City Council Member Peter Koo**. “Many thanks to the DEP for listening to the needs of its constituents and working to provide relief to seniors, low-income families.”

“As we seek to change the tax system to make it more equitable for homeowners across the City, this credit is a clear step in the right direction,” said **City Council Member I. Daneek Miller**. “In this year’s budget, we expanded property tax relief for veterans. This program will give seniors the opportunity to spend the money they have on the necessities they need. I look forward to taking further steps to change the City’s property tax system so it is fairer for everyone. I want to thank Acting DEP Commissioner Sapienza, and everyone at DEP, for implementing this program.”

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