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DEP Certifies That Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Is Meeting Clean Water Act Secondary Treatment Standards

Fulfills Key Wastewater Treatment Goal in DEP's Strategic Plan

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced that DEP has submitted documentation to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation certifying that the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant is meeting the Clean Water Act's secondary treatment standards, two years ahead of schedule. Under the Clean Water Act, wastewater must be treated to the point that at least 85% of certain pollutants are removed before post-treated water — known as effluent — can be discharged into surrounding waterways. The city's wastewater treatment plants have been on average meeting secondary treatment standards since 2010, but this is the first time all 14 plants will be individually certified as meeting the Clean Water Act's secondary treatment standards since they were established in 1972.

"The Clean Water Act has been a major impetus behind New York City's efforts to restore the health and beauty of our harbor, and Mayor Bloomberg has invested billions to raise the city's wastewater treatment process to the standards set in that landmark legislation," said Commissioner Holloway. "Newtown Creek is the last of the city's 14 wastewater treatment plants to certify compliance with Clean Water Act standards, and thanks to an unprecedented level of investment in water and wastewater infrastructure, we did it two years ahead of schedule. Thanks to this commitment, treatment of the 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater New Yorkers generate every day is meeting Clean Water Act standards, and New York harbor is the cleanest it's been in more than a century."

The largest of the city's plants, the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant went into operation in 1967. The plant is in the midst of a \$5 billion extensive upgrade to further improve water quality and increase the plant's wet weather treatment capacity from 620 million gallons per day (mgd) to 700 mgd. The plant, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn,

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serves approximately one million residents within a 15,000 acre drainage area. As part of the Consent Judgment with DEC, DEP began the plant's upgrade to secondary treatment and construction work began in 2000 and is expected to be completed in 2013. Last January, DEP and DEC announced that the City's plants were collectively exceeding the required monthly removal of key pollutants and the Newtown Creek plant is now meeting those standards.

The plant's extensive upgrade plan includes improved operating systems, expanded electrical power capacity, replaced transformers, new disinfection systems, new digesters and centrifuges, upgraded pumping stations, and new aeration and sedimentation basins and sludge storage tanks. The plant's disinfection systems have been completely reconstructed to more efficiently eliminate pathogens in the sewage. As part of the upgrade, a new control room was recently completed, and will begin operating this summer once the remaining two of five new main sewage pumps are installed and put into operation. The final major part of the upgrade includes construction of the central residuals building, new aeration tanks, and additional odor minimization work.

The treatment process includes physical, chemical, and biological processes that remove at least 85% of pollutants and result in well-treated, high-quality effluent, which is then released into New York City's surrounding waterways. For the last 40 years, the city has increased its wastewater treatment capacity and enhanced the level of pathogens that are removed through the treatment process, which treats 1.3 billion gallons a day during dry weather and double that amount when it rains. The city's wastewater treatment plants are equipped to handle up to 3.6 billion gallons per day during wet weather.

Certifying that the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has achieved secondary treatment limits is a part of the wastewater treatment section outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The new plan, the product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, builds on PlaNYC, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint for New York City. The plan is available on DEP's website at www.nyc.gov/dep.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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 or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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