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DEP Joins State Senator Leroy Comrie, Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman and Council Member I Daneek Miller to Distribute Rain Barrels to Homeowners in Southeast Queens



Rain Barrels Collect Precipitation, Reduce Residential Water Bills and Help to Protect the Health of Jamaica Bay

Photos of the Event are Available on [DEP's Flickr Page](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on Saturday joined New York State Senator Leroy Comrie, Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman, and Council Member I. Daneek Miller to distribute rain barrels to approximately 200 homeowners in the St. Albans, Cambria Heights, Rosedale and Laurelton neighborhoods of Southeast Queens. The 60-gallon rain barrels are easy to install and connect directly to a property owner's downspout to capture and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. The water collected in the rain barrel can then be used to water lawns and gardens, or for other outdoor chores. Rain barrels can help reduce a homeowner's water bill as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. They also help to reduce the amount of stormwater that enters the City's sewer system, which helps to protect the health of local waterways, including Jamaica Bay. Last year, DEP distributed a record-setting 11,111 rain barrels to New York City homeowners. Saturday's event was held at Roy Wilkins Park in Jamaica and the rain barrels were provided free of charge.

"Rain barrels promote sustainability while also allowing homeowners to conserve water and save money," said **DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza**. "Additionally, collecting stormwater eases pressure on the city's sewer infrastructure, which helps to reduce street flooding and improve the health of Jamaica Bay."

More Information

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“I commend Acting Commissioner Sapienza for partnering with local elected leaders to continue the rain barrel program,” said **State Senator Leroy Comrie**. “Rain barrels provide tremendous help to our environment by encouraging gardening, conserving water, and reducing erosion. With Earth Day coming up, I encourage everyone to practice environmental stewardship by participating in a rain barrel giveaway this spring.”

“This was a great community event highlighting the different ways we can make our homes more sustainable,” said **Assembly Member Alicia Hyndman**. “These rain barrels help homeowners save money on their water bills and protects our environment. Looking forward to our next one.”

“Rain barrel giveaways continue to be one of the most popular events in the district, and I was pleased to once again work with my colleagues in government and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to make the one at the Roy Wilkins Recreation Center such a success,” said **Councilman I. Daneek Miller**. “These rain barrels have been an effective tool in keeping our communities clean and safe. By providing residents an easy way to collect excess water, it mitigates flooding and keeps our backyards green. I want to thank DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza, Senator Leroy Comrie, and Assemblywoman Alicia Hyndman for coming together and coordinating these efforts.”

DEP’s Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City’s Green Infrastructure Plan that aims to capture stormwater before it can ever enter the sewer system and thereby reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. DEP has committed to invest \$2.4 billion in green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls, such as rain barrels, to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows by 2030.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP’s efforts to conserve water as part of a \$1 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of this initiative, DEP has begun a project to repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that supplies roughly half of the city’s daily drinking water. In order to complete these repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down in 2022. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent.

In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP is installing activation buttons on spray showers at 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. Work is also underway to install new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. And, DEP has partnered with hotels, restaurants and hospitals across the city to reduce water use at these facilities by five percent annually.

Installation of rain barrels is easy and they require little maintenance. Each homeowner who received a rain barrel on Saturday was provided with an installation kit and instructions. Rain barrels should only be used for non-potable purposes, such as gardening, and must be disconnected from the downspout during the winter months to avoid freezing.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high quality drinking water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8.5 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 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 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 in the upstate watershed. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program, with a planned \$20.7 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).