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Department of Environmental Protection Celebrates Opening of New Water Quality Laboratory in Hawthorne

Laboratory Employs 45 Scientists, Who Perform 90,000 Tests Annually to Ensure Safety and High Quality of New York City’s Drinking Water Supply

Photos are Available on [DEP’s Flickr Page](#)

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd today opened a new, state-of-the-art water quality laboratory in Hawthorne, New York. The facility will analyze thousands of water samples each year to help ensure the safety and high quality of New York City’s drinking water supply. The 20,000-square-foot lab is located in an existing office complex on Skyline Drive in Hawthorne. The facility employs 45 chemists, microbiologists and other scientists who collect and test water samples from key locations throughout the watershed.

“DEP is proud to open this new laboratory in Hawthorne, which will provide our water quality scientists with the space, infrastructure and other resources needed to perform hundreds of analyses each day,” said **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd**. “The water samples that are tested here come from critically important parts of our water supply system, including reservoirs and treatment facilities that convey water directly into the city’s distribution system. Because of this, the Hawthorne Laboratory and the highly skilled scientists who work here are key to ensuring the safety and high-quality of New York City’s drinking water.”

The new Hawthorne Laboratory includes modern equipment to process and test water samples that are collected 365 days each year. DEP scientists in

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Hawthorne collect more than 8,600 samples annually from reservoirs, treatment facilities, streams, wastewater treatment plants and other key locations throughout the watershed east of the Hudson River. Many of these samples are collected from reservoirs or facilities that provide untreated water to dozens of communities in Putnam and Westchester counties, which purchase water from New York City’s supply system. Nearly 90,000 tests are performed on these samples throughout the course of a typical year. In addition, scientists at the Hawthorne Laboratory oversee a system of robotic monitoring equipment that analyzes the drinking water an additional 320,000 times annually.

The new laboratory replaces the former Kensico Laboratory, which was built in 1955 alongside Kensico Reservoir in Valhalla. Built for the analytical methods of its time, the Kensico Laboratory did not have adequate space or electric service for modern equipment. Water quality scientists from a former laboratory in Brewster and an existing DEP office in Valhalla will also be stationed in Hawthorne. The Hawthorne facility is one of four water quality laboratories that are operated by DEP, with the others located in Grahamsville, Kingston and Queens. All the laboratories have been upgraded in recent years to meet modern standards. Scientists at those laboratories collect roughly 48,000 samples from the watershed and distribution system each year. Those samples are tested more than 560,000 times annually as part of one of the most vigorous water-quality programs in the world.

Establishing the laboratory in Hawthorne is also part of a wider plan by DEP to upgrade facilities in the southern portion of its water supply system. The former Kensico Laboratory will eventually be refurbished and used as office space for DEP employees who operate and maintain that portion of the water supply system.

DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City’s water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned 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](#).

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