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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSIONER  
STRICKLAND SUSPEND WATER BILLS FOR PROPERTIES SEVERELY DAMAGED BY  
HURRICANE SANDY**

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter H. Strickland Jr., today announced that the City will temporarily suspend water bills for customers whose properties were severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy. Residential and commercial properties that the Department of Buildings has tagged red, meaning they are damaged beyond repair or in need of extensive structural repairs, as well as those that have been tagged yellow, meaning that they have less extensive but still significant damage, will not have to make a monthly water bill payment until June 1, 2013. The Department of Environmental Protection also will waive standard fees for properties where water service has been disconnected from the City's water supply because of storm damage and will suspend interest fees and collection actions on affected properties that were delinquent before the storm. Yesterday, the Mayor, Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and Finance Commissioner David M. Frankel announced two property tax relief measures for homeowners who experienced storm damage, including an interest-free extension on the next property tax bill from January 1, 2013 to April 1, 2013.

"For those faced with the hard work of rebuilding after the storm, we are doing all that we can to provide assistance and relief," said Mayor Bloomberg. "By deferring water bill payments and other charges, New Yorkers can focus their attention and money on more immediate and pressing needs."

"With so many properties damaged by Sandy, we want to be sure people only pay for the water they use and not be held responsible for leaks caused by the storm," said Commissioner Strickland. "After the storm, the Automated Meter Reading program we invested in allowed us to see which customers needed our help and we will carefully review accounts so New Yorkers hardest hit by Sandy get an accurate bill and are not burdened by estimated charges."

The Department of Environmental Protection will not send water bills to customers whose properties received a red or yellow tag until May 1, 2013. Payment on those bills will be due by June 1, 2013. Fees for water service lines that had to be disconnected because of the hurricane will be waived, as will interest accruals on delinquent accounts and collection actions for affected properties, including automated calls and delinquency mailings, until June 1, 2013.




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The Department will also review all affected accounts to ensure that they are accurately billed for use and will automatically remove charges associated for leaks caused by storm damage. Following the storm, the Department of Environmental Protection collected data showing extensive leaking, impaired water use and other problems that were digitally reported through automated meter reading technology. These devices do not measure water use, but remotely report the water consumption to the Department and also let customers track their water use rates in real-time. The automated meter readers will allow the Department of Environmental Protection to issue accurate bills based on real consumption and not past use, and will also remove any charges associated with leaks and storm-related irregularities.

The water bill suspension is one of several relief measures the City has taken to assist affected home and property owners. The Department of Finance, with the authorization of the City Council, will provide an interest-free extension to Class 1 and 2 residential properties that received a red tag from the Department of Buildings. Quarterly and semi-annual payments typically due on January 1, 2013, will be delayed to April 1, 2013. More than 3,000 properties are eligible for the extension, and the average property tax bill is \$506. The City has also proposed to reimburse homeowners for a portion of the taxes paid this fiscal year. The measure requires State approval and if enacted, more than 900 properties would be eligible, with an average rebate of \$794. The Finance Department is also working to ensure that the property tax assessments for FY 2014 reflect the post-hurricane conditions.

- 30 -

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