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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DISTRIBUTES RAIN
BARRELS TO HOMEOWNERS IN RICHMOND HILL**

*Rain Barrels Collect and Store Stormwater that Lands on Rooftops and Keeps it Off the Streets and Out
of the Sewer System, Helping to Clean Local Waterways*

*Program Helps Homeowners Conserve Water and Save Money by Storing Stormwater for Gardening
and Lawn Care Use*

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today distributed 60-gallon rain barrels, free of charge, to approximately 100 homeowners in the Richmond Hill neighborhood of Queens. The rain barrels connect directly to a home's downspout and collect and store the stormwater that falls on the rooftop. This water can then be used over time to water lawns and gardens. By collecting the stormwater that would otherwise run off into the street, the use of rain barrels helps mitigate roadway flooding and eases pressure on the City's sewer system and treatment plants. Rain barrels also help reduce homeowner's water bills as watering lawns and gardens can account for up to 40 percent of an average household's water use during the summer months. Since 2008, DEP has distributed more than 2,300 rain barrels and today's event was held at the Holy Child Jesus Church.

"Using a rain barrel is a simple way for homeowners to conserve water, save money, and reduce local roadway flooding," said DEP Commissioner Carter Strickland. "By capturing stormwater, rain barrels also ease pressure on the City's sewer system and help improve the health of local waterways."

"DEP is helping Richmond Hill homeowners conserve water, save money, and ease street flooding by distributing these rain barrels," said City Council Member Eric Ulrich. "I would like to thank Commissioner Strickland and Holy Child Jesus Church for partnering with me to host this event."

DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is part of New York City's Green Infrastructure Plan. Launched by Mayor Bloomberg in September 2010, the Green Infrastructure Plan aims to capture stormwater before it ever enters the sewer system and thereby significantly reduce combined sewer overflows into local waterways. Over the next three years, DEP will invest \$187 million in public and private funds on green infrastructure projects as well as other source controls such as rain barrels, and, by 2030, DEP plans to spend an estimated \$2.4 billion to significantly reduce combined sewer overflows.

The rain barrel program also builds upon DEP's efforts to conserve water as part of New York City's Water for the Future Program, a \$1.7 billion initiative to ensure clean, reliable, and safe drinking water for more than nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. As part of the Water for the Future Program, DEP will repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct that supplies roughly half of the city's daily drinking water. In order to make repairs to the Aqueduct, the tunnel must be temporarily shut down

between 2020 and 2021. Ahead of the planned shutdown, DEP aims to reduce citywide water consumption by five percent. In addition to encouraging homeowners to conserve water, DEP has initiated a partnership with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to install activation buttons on spray showers in 400 playgrounds around the city that will save 1.5 million gallons of water a day during the summer months. DEP is also installing new, high efficiency fixtures in the bathrooms of 500 City schools to reduce water consumption by nearly 4 million gallons each school day. In the first public/private partnership, the Hotel Association of New York City has partnered with DEP to reduce water use at some of its premier hotels by 5 percent annually.

Installation of rain barrels is easy and they require little maintenance. Each homeowner 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.

Participation in DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program is by invitation only. DEP mails invitations to register for the Rain Barrel Program to single-family homeowners and several giveaway events will be scheduled over the next three years. For more information about DEP's Rain Barrel Giveaway Program visit www.nyc.gov/dep.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight 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 \$14 billion in investments over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. This capital program is responsible for critical projects like City Water Tunnel No. 3; the Staten Island Bluebelt program, an ecologically sound and cost-effective stormwater management system; the city's Watershed Protection Program, which protects sensitive lands upstate near the city's reservoirs in order to maintain their high water quality; and the installation of more than 820,000 Automated Meter Reading devices, which will allow customers to track their daily water use, more easily manage their accounts and be alerted to potential leaks on their properties. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.