

## Fiscal Year 2011 Water Rate Proposal



**O**n April 9th, DEP proposed a 12.9 % increase to the water rate for Fiscal Year 2011, which was 1.4% below the increase we projected last year. You can review the entire presentation here [G](#). By law, the cost of water and sewer service must be set at a level to meet DEP's operating expenses, and to fund the capital projects necessary to operate the system. Right now, DEP is in the midst of an historic period of capital investment—we're building a water filtration plant in the Bronx, an Ultra-Violet Disinfection Facility in Westchester, and City Water Tunnel No. 3 – 600 feet below the City. The rate increase proposed for next

year will ensure that DEP can continue all of this work, and supply, distribute, and treat the more than one billion gallons of water that New Yorkers need every day.

In Staten Island on Tuesday, May 4th, the Water Board held the first of six public hearings on the rate proposal, which will continue through next Tuesday, May 18. The Bronx hearing was held Thursday night, and the third took place at the City Planning Commission in Manhattan on Friday afternoon. The schedule for the three remaining hearings is available here [G](#), and the public can also submit testimony online at the Water Board's website [G](#).

Each meeting starts with a brief presentation on the rate proposal by **Commissioner Cas Holloway**. The message from those attending has been clear and consistent: New Yorkers across the five boroughs have had to trim their budget and tighten their belts, and they expect DEP to do the same. They

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## Spotlight on Safety

### Forklift Safety

OSHA estimates that 1 million forklifts are used in workplaces in the U.S. Each year, nearly 100 workers are killed and another 20,000 are seriously injured in forklift-related incidents.

The 5 most common dangers in using Forklifts are:

1. Forklift Turnovers
2. Nearby Worker Struck by Forklift
3. Victim Crushed by Forklift
4. Falls from Forklifts
5. Failure to Inspect or Perform Proper Maintenance

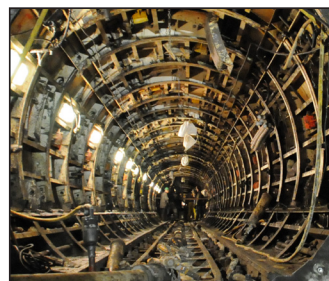
DEP's policy is to ensure the safe operation and proper maintenance

of powered industrial trucks (PITs) used for material handling (e.g., forklifts) and to comply with the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.178.

DEP employees and supervisors must successfully complete training in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.178(l) before being permitted to operate a PIT (other than during training and evaluation). The training program includes instruction and hands-on operational training on the types of PITs to be used by the employee, and an evaluation in the work place.

Click here for DEP's Policy on Powered Industrial Trucks. [G](#)

## Commissioner's Corner



**Mark-Viverito, Reyna, Koppell, Fidler, Brewer, Ignizio, Foster, Jackson, Mealy, Van Bramer, Oddo and Sanders** attended and asked questions about the legislation, which would make it more difficult to collect overdue water and sewer charges from delinquent property owners.

The lien sale authority that the City Council and the Bloomberg Administration agreed to in 2007 has been an incredibly effective tool to ensure that water users who can afford to pay their bills actually pay. You can read my full testimony to the committee here [G](#). In these tough economic times, we must do everything we can to help those who are struggling—and initiatives like the Water Debt Assistance Program [G](#) offers some relief to homeowners who have been particularly hard hit during the recent downturn. But lien sale authority—which must be re-authorized by the Council this year—has brought in \$185 million from customers on the 90-day lien-sale list, and another \$81.6 million in Payment Agreements that responsible New Yorkers would otherwise have had to absorb. The law needs to be re-authorized and expanded to help us keep water rates as low as possible, and we look forward to working with the City Council to do that.

On Friday, we announced a new partnership with the retailer Fishs Eddy, which is making a whole new range of merchandise available bearing the NYC Water logo, including glasses, coasters, and t-shirts [G](#) and [G](#). These new products will remind New Yorkers that tap water is a healthy, sustainable and cost effective thirst quencher, right at their finger tips. And to help ensure that our drinking water remains high quality, yesterday we launched an expanded Marcellus Shale web feature on our website ([www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep)) [G](#) that outlines the basis for the City's position against natural gas drilling in the watershed, and a "Get Involved" page that directs visitors both to State and Federal agencies, and their local elected officials. Tell your friends and family to visit the site and make sure that their voices are heard!

Last week, the Water Board began holding public hearings on the water rate proposal Fiscal Year 2011, which you can read more about in this week's feature story. Last week, **Mayor Bloomberg** released the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2011. While there has been some improvement in the overall economic picture for New York City, we still face tremendous challenges balancing the budget. However, the Mayor made clear that we will continue to make the infrastructure investments necessary to make New York a place where people want to live and do business—and the water system is integral to that effort.

Last week we reached a major milestone on the Manhattan section of City Water Tunnel No. 3. The work included tunnel boring and the installation of 8.5 miles of concrete liner, as well as the construction of 10 shafts that will bring drinking water to City residents. You can read more about the tunnel here [G](#). Special thanks to **Louis Huang**, Chief of the Division of Waterworks Construction, who leads the construction management of this entire program and **Burjor Kharivala**, Chief of the Division of Waterworks Design, as well as the BEDC In-House Design team for their efforts; to turn the Manhattan leg on by 2013, we need to focus on completing the shaft connections to the below-street distribution network—which is happening at the 10 shaft sites throughout Manhattan.

Last Thursday, I testified before a joint hearing of the City Council's Community Development and Finance Committees on a bill that would amend Local Law 68, the water and sewer debt lien-sale authority. Council members **Vann, Recchia, Ferreras, Cabrera, Comrie,**

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city.

CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH PIPELINE. HELP IS ON THE WAY. [G](#)

## Focus on the Field



Local Law 76-09 stipulates that any building that uses or stores chemicals, or has equipment that is pressurized or uses water for cooling that poses an actual or potential risk to the City's water system, must install a Backflow Prevention Device (BPD) on all of their sprinkler/fire, and domestic water lines. A BPD must be installed on these water services to prevent contaminated water or waste from backing into the city water main should there be a sudden change in water pressure.

Approximately 14,000 of the original 22,000 potentially hazardous properties identified by the Division have been inspected and have met the requirements of the Local Law, and **Debra Siegel**, the Supervisor of the Compliance/Enforcement Unit makes sure that any remaining facilities are doing everything in their power to comply as well. Reporting to **James Luke**, Chief, Division of Permitting and Inspection and serving under Deputy Commissioner **James Roberts** for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations, Debra makes sure that everyone understands why they've been ordered to install a BPD. "Upon receiving a Commissioner's Order, panic and many times an-

ger is the recipient's immediate reaction," says Debra, who often converses with Professional Engineers, Registered Architects, and Licensed Master Plumbers, to assist them with the process of the installation of a BPD.

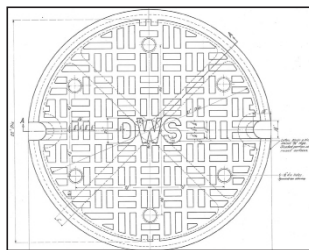
If a property or business owner doesn't comply, Debra's unit issues a Notice of Violation (NOV) and the recipient must appear at a hearing of the Environmental Control Board. "The installation of BPDs is something we have to monitor and enforce; we're serious about doing whatever we can to protect the City's drinking water that nine million people depend on every day".

Debra started her effort to protect the City's water supply when she joined DEP in the summer of 2001. Her most challenging assignment to date was the cross connection incident that affected the water supply in Southeast Queens, which occurred in 2007. Debra said of her and her staff, "We came together and worked long days and weekends to make sure the situation was rectified." Since then, they have developed and enforced new standards to help guarantee the safety of the City's water.

In her spare time, Debra plays "super mom" to her two teenage daughters, goes on movie and dinner dates with her husband, and takes care of her two other "children"; her dog, Jazzy, and her cat, Mikey.

## DEP: Then & Now

**Then:** This plan for a 24 inch diameter cast iron manhole cover is from a 1913 drawing created by the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity. The DWSGE existed from 1902-1968 and was responsible for maintaining built water supply structures as well as the construction and maintenance of the in-City distribution – a predecessor to DEP's own Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations.



**Now:** These manholes from the early 20th century when the Catskill Aqueduct and City Tunnel 1 were being built are still common place in NYC today. They are an enduring glimpse back into DEP history – and right underfoot!



## Ask Cas

askcas@dep.nyc.gov

**Q.** Is it true that the Silver Lake Tanks in Staten Island are the largest tanks in the world?

**A.** The Silver Lake tanks have a capacity of approximately 100 million gallons; the tank is divided in two sections to allow the use of 50 million gallons at a time. During periods of high consumption the tanks are used to supply Staten Island during the day. Also, if the Richmond Tunnel needs to be shut down for required maintenance the tanks provide several hours of supply. The tanks are filled at night when water demands are minimal.

As large as these tanks are, in 2004 the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority placed a 115 million gallon tank (Norumberga Covered Storage Facility) into service. While we are not sure if this is the largest tank in the world, it is larger than the Silver Lake tank.

(Revised Feature Article... - continued)

understand the need to invest in New York City's water infrastructure, but they've also made it clear that paying increased water and sewer rates is difficult.

That means that here at DEP, we need to do more with less. **Mayor Bloomberg** directed all City agencies to reduce their budgets, and we've already cut expenses for the next fiscal year by 8%. By reducing our costs, we were able to propose a water rate that was below last year's forecast. These cuts include challenging operational adjustments throughout the agency to ensure that we continue to deliver all of the services that New Yorkers rely upon every day.

The primary driver of water rate increases is debt service—the funds we pay to finance the \$14 billion in capital projects currently in design and construction throughout the five boroughs, and the upstate watershed. A majority of that work is the result of federal and State laws that mandate the scope and timing of certain investments—regardless of need or cost. DEP's debt service costs have increased by \$460 million since 2006, and we project that it

will increase by as much as 47% next year. To address this issue, we are working with the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Environmental Conservation to focus on projects that have a meaningful impact on water quality, and that are built within a timeframe that New Yorkers can afford.

We agree with the State DEC and Federal EPA that having the highest quality water is of the utmost importance. However, following a one-size-fits-all approach for regulation doesn't make sense given the unique nature of the City; we have pristine source waters for our drinking water and do not discharge our treated wastewater into anyone else's drinking water supply," said **Carter Strickland**, the Deputy Commissioner for Sustainability. "Working together, we can come up with cost-effective solutions that will protect water quality while minimizing rate increases."

As DEP works with its regulators, we can all do our part to make our agency run as efficiently and cost effectively as possible!

## Milestones

Congratulations to **Kimberly Cusumano**, OEHSC, who will be graduating from Queens College on May 27th, with a B.S. in Graphic Design.

## Event Calendar:

May is **Asian/Pacific Heritage Month** at DEP; exhibits of Asian artifacts, biographies, puzzles and recipes will be displayed in the 3rd floor corridor.

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**