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DEP Completes Electrical and Equipment Upgrades at Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant

Work Allows Nitrogen Reduction Technology Installation to Continue

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the completion of a project to upgrade and replace infrastructure and equipment at the Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant in Steinway, Queens. The project will improve overall efficiency and reliability and is a necessary precursor to a project currently under way that will significantly reduce nitrogen discharges that can impair water quality. The work just completed is part of a \$253 million upgrade that includes replaced electrical systems; upgraded collection equipment; rehabilitated gravity thickeners; and repaired deteriorating walls and walkways.

"We are continuously improving our wastewater treatment plants and water and sewer networks throughout the city to make sure they are reliable for future generations," said Commissioner Holloway. "Improving our water infrastructure is a key goal of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030, and this investment is critical to the reliability and long-term sustainability of the Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant, which treats up to 150 million gallons of wastewater each day. The new equipment replaces outdated infrastructure that required frequent repairs, and lays the foundation for a significant reduction in the amount of nitrogen Bowery Bay discharges as part of the treatment process. The goal of all this work is to continue the dramatic improvements in water quality throughout New York harbor that are critical to the development of New York City's more than 500 miles of waterfront."

The project included a mix of electrical and mechanical upgrades and replacements. The electrical work included an upgrade from 208 volts to a much more efficient 480 volts. The electrical distribution improvements replace older equipment that had become less reliable and will provide the electrical supply for existing equipment and sufficient capacity for future needs.

The rehabilitated gravity thickeners are a major component of the solids handling system. The solids removed from the

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wastewater are made uniform in the gravity thickeners before being sent to the digesters. Reliable thickeners improve digester performance which results in better digester gas production and reduced disposal costs. Failure of a thickener can result in the overload of the remaining units; this can cause process upsets that would result in poor performance and odors.

The completion of the infrastructure upgrades at Bowery Bay was necessary to allow the ongoing installation of biological nitrogen removal technology, which is scheduled for completion in 2012. The technology will reduce nitrogen discharges at the plant by more than 50%, from approximately 26,000 pounds per day to 12,000 pounds per day. In August, Commissioner Holloway announced the operation of enhanced treatment measures to cut by 45% the amount of nitrogen being discharged into the East River at the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Bronx. That phase of work cost \$280 million, and a second \$20 million phase will reduce nitrogen discharges further. DEP is investing an additional \$770 million in nitrogen reduction measures at Bowery Bay and the other two Upper East River wastewater treatment plants: Tallman Island and Wards Island. These projects are scheduled to be complete in 2012, and will reduce total nitrogen discharges into the East River by more than 52%.

Although it is not a pathogen and poses no risk to human beings, high levels of nitrogen can degrade the overall ecology of a waterway. They can lead to reduced levels of dissolved oxygen in waterways and excessive algae growth, especially in warm weather months.

The Bowery Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant went into operation in 1939 and is designed to treat 150 million gallons of wastewater a day. New Yorkers produce, and DEP treats, 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater every day. The wastewater is collected through 7,400 miles of lateral sewers that flow downhill into large interceptor sewers, which lead directly to the city's 14 wastewater treatment plants.

Mayor Bloomberg has made investing in the city's infrastructure a top priority. Since 2002, the City has invested more than \$5 billion in upgrading its 14 wastewater treatment plants. That work has already yielded benefits for New York's waterways, which are the cleanest they have been in 100 years since the City began collecting water quality data in New York Harbor. DEP also is reaching city-wide monthly average Clean Water Act secondary treatment standards for the first time ever – three years ahead of schedule.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents, including 8 million in New York City. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, and comprises 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 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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