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Contact: Charles G. Sturcken (718) 595-6600

MORE INFORMATION

NYC Department of Environmental Protection
Communications & Intergovernmental Affairs

59-17 Junction Boulevard
19th Floor
Flushing, NY 11373

(718) 595 - 6600

Construction of City Water Tunnel No. 3 Approaches Milestones Ensuring Improved Water Delivery and Quality for New Yorkers

DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd announced today that progress is being made on City Water Tunnel No. 3 construction, and, in particular, on the Manhattan section that runs from the far west side of the Holland Tunnel and curves around north to the lower and upper east side. Tunneling of the Manhattan leg of the tunnel began in October 2003. Mayor Bloomberg was present to help finish the tunneling route this past August.

“We are entering a phase that requires DEP to construct several shafts and chambers along an underground portion of the Manhattan section of the tunnel,” said Commissioner Lloyd. “Shafts serve as conduits for tunnel water to be delivered to local distribution mains,” continued the Commissioner. “Currently, shafts are under construction at various sites throughout Manhattan. DEP will commence a 6-month blasting project on or about November 13, 2006, at 59th Street and First Avenue. As with the previous shaft construction sites, it will be necessary to do some initial blasting at these locations.”

City Water Tunnel No. 3 is one of the largest and most complex capital construction projects in New York City history and has often been referred to as one of the world’s engineering marvels. Since 1998 and the completion of Stage 1, City Water Tunnel No. 3 has been delivering water to some residents in the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. By 2009 the Brooklyn/Queens leg will be activated, and it is expected that the lower Manhattan portion will begin delivering water by 2012. The capacity of these three legs will provide drinking water from City Water Tunnel No. 3 to parts of all of the City’s five boroughs, forming a firm backup to the water supply system. When the tunnel is completed, it will ensure the dependability of the City’s drinking water supply well into the next Century.

Commissioner Lloyd said, “Despite our use of modern day equipment certain production methods remain standard in construction projects, and in order to enlarge the shaft to its desired diameter, drill and blast procedure must still be used. When a shaft is completed, it is closed and covered, and becomes part of the streetscape. We do understand that the blasting can still be disruptive for local residents,

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and we do our best to keep it to a minimum. We ask the public for its patience as we work to continue bringing you the safe and reliable drinking water you currently enjoy.”

In an effort to be a good neighbor DEP notifies local residents and community boards prior to blasting; places ads in local papers in advance of blasting, and uses the safest and most modern blasting methods available.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) protects the environmental health, welfare and natural resources of the City and its residents. The Department manages the City's water supply, serving more than half the population of New York State with over 1 billion gallons of quality drinking water daily. Nineteen reservoirs provide water to 8 million City residents through a network grid of over 6,200 miles of water mains throughout the five boroughs as well as an additional 1 million consumers in four upstate counties. DEP manages 14 in-City wastewater treatment plans, and an additional nine treatment plants upstate. DEP carries out federal Clean Water Act rules and regulations, handles hazardous materials emergencies and toxic site remediation, oversees asbestos monitoring and removal, enforces the City's air and noise codes, bills and collects on City water and sewer accounts, provides educational materials and resources to City schools, and manages city wide water conservation programs.