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CONTACT:

Farrell Sklerov (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

DEP Launches Ambitious and Forward-Thinking Strategic Plan

100 Initiatives Mean Clean Waters, Fresh Air, and a Brighter Future for New York City

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today unveiled *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. Each initiative directly advances one of DEP's core functions: serving nine million water customers; supplying and treating more than one billion gallons of water every day; making cost-effective infrastructure investments; and achieving a sustainable quality of life for all New Yorkers. The new plan, the product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, builds on *PlaNYC*, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint for New York City. From improving harbor water quality to harnessing clean renewable energy, *Strategy 2011-2014* includes bold and achievable initiatives that will improve New Yorkers' quality of life — at a price they can afford. The plan will guide DEP's investments and operations over the next four years, and DEP will publish an annual report card on the progress of each initiative.

"DEP and its predecessor agencies have always had to think big about the future," said Commissioner Holloway. "From finding clean water supplies to building sewage treatment plants to save our harbor, DEP has overcome many obstacles to New York City's continued growth and prosperity. Today is no different. Combined sewer overflows impair our harbor waters; our vital water supply infrastructure must be maintained and upgraded; and our energy needs are unsustainable over the long term. This plan lays out 100 specific initiatives to address these and many other challenges, at a cost New Yorkers can afford. DEP's first obligation is to the nine million customers we serve every day, including 835,000 property owners who pay the water bills. And our nearly 6,000 dedicated and hard-working employees who will make this plan a reality are committed to providing unmatched service to our customers and the city we serve."

Customer Service

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DEP serves three distinct groups: nine million New Yorkers who drink NYC Water every day, including eight million residents in New York City and nearly one million people who live in Westchester, Putnam, Ulster and Orange counties; 835,000 customers who pay for the water and sewer services that fund New York City's water and wastewater system; and the businesses and professionals — including developers, engineers, construction companies, and plumbers — that need DEP permits to continue the city's growth. Transparency, responsiveness and efficiency for all of these customers are a key element of the plan.

Key Customer Service Initiatives:

- ▶ Develop a leak notification system for customers who want to know when their water use deviates from normal consumption patterns
- ▶ Offer customers a service line protection plan
- ▶ Complete the installation of wireless meter reading and convert from quarterly to monthly account billing
- ▶ Increase online permitting for businesses, engineers and contractors

Operations and Capital

With 19 reservoirs, 295 miles of aqueducts, a nearly 2,000 square miles watershed (roughly the size of Delaware), 6,600 miles of water mains, 7,400 miles of sewers, 965 water quality monitoring stations, 109,000 fire hydrants, 141,000 catch basins and 14 wastewater treatment plants, New York City's water and wastewater systems are vast and complex. Chief among DEP's operational imperatives is to protect New York City's largely unfiltered water supply; maintain a distribution system that carries drinking water to and wastewater from nearly one million properties in New York City; and treat 1.3 billion gallons of wastewater each day to the highest standards before it is released into our surrounding waterways. Meeting these obligations and maintaining the infrastructure required to do so is vital to the health, safety, and economic development of New York City and upstate.

Key Operations Initiatives:

- ▶ Maintain the city's unfiltered drinking water status
- ▶ Complete key construction projects to protect and maintain drinking water quality: the Catskill/Delaware Ultraviolet Disinfection Facility, the Croton Water Filtration Plant, and Stage 2 of City Water Tunnel No. 3
- ▶ Protect the water supply from hydrofracking
- ▶ Repair leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct
- ▶ Build out and upgrade the sewer network in southeast Queens, Staten Island and other neighborhoods that need additional capacity
- ▶ Restore New York Harbor by removing oxygen-depleting nitrogen from wastewater
- ▶ Develop a long-term, sustainable citywide sludge management program

DEP has the largest capital program of any city agency and one of the largest of any public utility in the country. There is \$11 billion in capital construction, and \$3 billion in design, which will support roughly 5,000 private-sector jobs for

each of the next four years. These unprecedented investments will ensure that New York City's water and wastewater systems can support New York City's growth now and for generations to come. These investments are financed by 835,000 bill-paying customers, and it is crucial that projects remain on time and on budget, in order to keep water rates as low as possible.

Key Capital Initiatives:

- ▶ Achieve \$100 million in savings by implementing an Asset Management Program and a 10-year capital program that prioritizes funding critical assets
- ▶ Recruit top engineering talent
- ▶ Become the owner of choice in the regional and nation design and construction community by improving standard contract language and strengthening outreach to industry partners, including minority- and women-owned businesses

Sustainability

DEP promotes the public health, economic development and quality-of-life of New York City by developing sustainable environmental policy and enforcing regulations designed to improve harbor water quality, reduce air and noise pollution, and control hazardous materials, like asbestos. Central to this effort is controlling energy needs and greenhouse gas emissions, which are projected to increase in the coming years when new investments like the Croton Water Filtration Plant come on line.

Key Sustainability Initiatives:

- ▶ Accelerate meaningful regulatory reform and advocate for new state and federal regulations that accommodate local conditions
- ▶ Reduce stormwater runoff from new and existing development by capturing the first inch on 10% of the impervious areas in combined sewer overflow watersheds over the next 20 years
- ▶ Facilitate new gas transmission projects into New York City to lower gas prices and increase the reliability of the supply
- ▶ Develop 30-50 megawatts of clean energy supply at DEP's facilities through public/private partnerships
- ▶ Update the New York City Air Code for the first time since 1970
- ▶ Enhance the 2005 Noise Code

The ambitious goals set out in this plan can only be achieved if operations are safe for DEP's nearly 6,000 employees, the contractors at more than 65 construction sites, and all New Yorkers. Continuous training, rigorous attention to compliance, and open communication among DEP employees and contractors is essential to running the safest, most efficient and cost-effective water utility in the nation.

To meet this challenge, DEP will launch H2OStat, an agency-wide effort to assess real-time performance based on more than 200 key indicators. This new management initiative will improve operational efficiency by setting

benchmarks and holding managers accountable for meeting them. As part of this effort, DEP will convene a Sustainability and Technology Advisory Board of the best and the brightest in water and wastewater science, technology, and management. DEP will publish an annual report card on our progress implementing Strategy 2011-2014, and any additions or changes to the plan going forward.

Commissioner Holloway will present "Strategy 2011-2014" tonight at 6:30 at the Surrogate's Courthouse, 31 Chambers Street. The plan is available at www.nyc.gov/dep.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. 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. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

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