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Fall Foliage

Ashokan Reservoir - New York City Water Supply System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update on Queens Drinking Water Supply*DEP Continues Effort to Identify and Remediate Source of PERC Contamination in Parts of St. Albans, Cambria Heights and Hollis Neighborhoods in Queens*

As part of its continuing effort to trace, find and remediate the source of tetrachloroethylene, or PERC, in drinking water in sections of the St. Albans, Cambria Heights and Hollis neighborhoods in Queens, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is performing heightened, extensive testing, dispatching teams of inspectors to check for potential faulty water/sewer devices in local businesses, and flushing hydrants to draw the contamination out of the water supply. PERC is a chemical used primarily in dry cleaning and auto-body repair, the most likely sources of contamination in this area.

The average level of PERC detected has been dropping and now stands at 3.7 parts per billion (ppb), below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's maximum contaminant level of 5 ppb. To date, DEP has taken 74 samples in the relevant area. Of these:

- ▶ 24 samples detected no presence of PERC;
- ▶ 39 of the samples detected PERC, (and 20 of these demonstrated levels of PERC above 5 ppb);
- ▶ 11 samples are still pending; and
- ▶ sample results from 10 locations taken last night indicated 6 non-detects.

DEP will sample 15 other locations this morning and 15 more this evening, and the New York City Health

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Department will perform additional sampling in the area.

Any potential health effects would depend on duration and concentration of exposure to PERC. No known long- or short-term health problems would be expected from the concentrations detected in Queens for people drinking, cooking or bathing in the water for a matter of weeks.

As of today, May 10th, DEP has already canvassed 228 local businesses and will inspect another 100 today. Water and sewer workers have posted informational flyers on 65% of the relevant residences, and DEP plans to notify the remaining residences by this evening. DEP has received 853 calls and continues to staff phones to address the questions and concerns of City residents.

These continuing efforts are in response to DEP's detection of minute amounts of PERC during routine water sampling earlier this week in sections of the St. Albans, Cambria Heights and Hollis neighborhoods in Queens. Tests throughout the remainder of the City show no detectable PERC in any place other than these localized areas.

DEP will update residents on the situation as further information becomes available.

DEP will have a resource center on site at Springfield Boulevard between 110th and 112th Avenues to provide information to local residents. There will also be information available on DEP's website at nyc.gov/DEP. Residents with non-emergency questions can call the City's helpline at 3-1-1.