



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

December 21, 2011

No. 108

## **DEP Issues Draft Environmental Impact Statement For Repair of the Delaware Aqueduct**

*\$2.1 Billion Water for the Future Program Will Ensure  
Clean, Reliable and Safe Drinking Water for New Yorkers for Decades*

Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland today released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for DEP's *Water for the Future* program, a \$2.1 billion initiative that will ensure clean, reliable and safe drinking water for nine million New Yorkers for decades to come. The program has two main elements: repairing leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct—which supplies roughly half of the city's daily drinking water needs—and supplementing the city's water supply during construction work on the tunnel. The DEIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project and presents alternatives to the project. In November 2010, DEP outlined a design and timeline to address leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct by building a two-and-a-half mile bypass tunnel around a portion of the aqueduct that is leaking in the Roseton area of the Town of Newburgh, and repairing leaks in the Town of Wawarsing from inside the existing tunnel. The DEIS studies areas west of the Hudson River around Wawarsing and Newburgh, where a shaft will be dug, and east of the river around Wappinger, where a second shaft will be dug. Under the plan, DEP will break ground on the bypass tunnel in 2013, and complete the connection to the Delaware Aqueduct in 2021.

“This is an important step in this historic project, which will help to ensure that New York City's drinking water system remains viable for future generations,” said Commissioner Strickland. “This document lays out the scope of the project and its impact on communities and what we plan to do to ensure as few disruptions as possible in the course of this massive, multi-year undertaking.”

The DEIS analyzes potential adverse environmental impacts from work directly related to the Delaware Aqueduct repair. A second assessment will focus on the water supply augmentation projects during the period when the tunnel will be out of service. The technical analyses in an environmental impact statement typically describe conditions today, and then forecasts these conditions to the future, under a “no build” scenario and with the proposed project. The DEIS released for public comment determined that construction would not result in significant adverse impacts on land use, zoning, public policy, open space, visual character, historic and archaeological resources, socioeconomic conditions, community facilities, natural resources and water resources, hazardous materials, air quality, energy and greenhouse gas emissions, infrastructure, solid waste, coastal zone areas, or public health.

During construction, the DEIS predicts temporary adverse impacts on traffic and noise for both the east and west of Hudson study areas. Mitigation measures to address impacts are proposed and would be incorporated, including signal retimings, upgrading traffic signal controllers and detectors, and traffic control plans at impacted intersections, and noise control measures at the construction sites in order to minimize traffic and noise.

A link to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement can be found at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). The public can provide written or oral comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Public hearings are scheduled on the following dates:

Town of Newburgh	Newburgh Town Hall 1496 Route 300 Newburgh, NY 12550 (snow date January 30, 2012)	January 23, 2012 7:00-9:00pm
Town of Wappinger	Wappingers Junior High School 30 Major McDonald Way Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 (snow date January 31, 2012)	January 24, 2012 7:00-9:00pm
Wawarsing	Wawarsing Town Hall 108 Canal Street Ellenville, NY 12428 (snow date February 1, 2012)	January 25, 2012 6:00-9:00pm

DEP will also accept written comments through the close of the public comment period on Friday, February 17, 2012.

The construction of the bypass tunnel and the repair of the lining will ensure that DEP can continue to deliver high quality drinking water every day. The tunnel repair and project is expected to create between 1,000 and 1,500 jobs. Preparation for the repair work is currently underway, including: installation of pumping system and site improvements to support construction; purchasing equipment for the repair; planning and design of the bypass tunnel; geotechnical investigations; discussions with local stakeholders; and investigating augmentation projects.

The 85-mile aqueduct, completed in 1944, conveys approximately half of the city's drinking water from four upstate reservoirs to more than eight million people in New York City, and one million people in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who also rely on the City's high quality drinking water. The aqueduct is a concrete-lined tunnel that varies in diameter from 13.5 to 19.5 feet and runs as deep as 2,000 feet beneath the ground. It was constructed by drilling and blasting, and, in most areas, lined with unreinforced concrete.

Some work for the repair of the Delaware Aqueduct began earlier this year, including:

- In July, DEP announced that the first geotechnical test borings were underway for the construction of an access shaft in the Town of Newburgh and in the Town of Wappinger. Construction of shafts in Newburgh and Wappinger will enable the construction of a new

tunnel to bypass a leaking section of the Delaware Aqueduct near Roseton. These were the first of several planned borings to obtain geophysical data for the design and construction of the bypass tunnel. DEP will break ground on the shafts for the bypass tunnel in 2013, and will begin the bypass connection in 2020. Geotechnical test borings are used to obtain geophysical data for the design and construction of the bypass tunnel, including basic underground rock formations and other conditions that will dictate the design of the tunnel, the selection of equipment, and construction techniques.

- In June, DEP started the second phase of a ground-breaking study to evaluate the effectiveness of mitigating leaks in the Delaware Aqueduct by adding lime to water in order to seal the cracks from within the tunnel. The \$4 million project, which entails building a small-scale water system that replicates full-scale water supply conditions, will help the city better determine if full-scale application of lime will be successful, particularly in the Wawarsing area.

The plan to repair the Delaware Aqueduct is part of *Strategy 2011-2014*, the 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. 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. The plan is available on DEP's website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep).

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than one 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 from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities as scientists, engineers, surveyors, and administrative professionals, and perform other critical responsibilities. DEP has invested more than \$1.5 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program for the repair of Gilboa Dam and other in-city and upstate infrastructure, with a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](http://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

**Contact:** Farrell Sklerov / Michael Saucier (718) 595-6600