

*Commissioner's Corner*



Last Wednesday, I testified before the New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection and Subcommittee on Capital Budget and presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Preliminary Budget. Our budget outlines the department's priorities for the next several years, and I wanted to share this information with all of you.

The preliminary expense budget for FY19 includes \$543.8 million to pay the salaries of our nearly 6,000 employees, \$167.2 million for taxes on upstate lands that protect water quality, \$92.8 million for energy costs and \$105.4 million for chemical treatments and biosolids management. Our Preliminary Four-Year Capital Plan budget for FY19-22 is \$11.2 billion, including:

**DRINKING WATER**

We have budgeted a total of \$1.2 billion for water supply contracts, including \$30 million for closeout work at the Croton Water Filtration Plant, \$185 million to continue our watershed protection programs, and \$376 million to reconstruct dams in the watersheds. There is also \$1.2 billion allocated for the replacement of in-City water mains. In December, the NYS Department of Health awarded DEP a new 10-year waiver to continue delivering unfiltered drinking water from our Catskill/Delaware water supply, called the Filtration Avoidance Determination or FAD. This agreement commits the City, working with our upstate partners, to investing \$1 billion over the next decade towards programs that protect our drinking water.

\$112 million is for high-level storm sewers, and

- \$270 million to expand the Blue-belt system on Staten Island

**SOUTHEAST QUEENS**

**Mayor de Blasio** has committed \$1.9 billion over ten years for the Southeast Queens Flood Mitigation Plan, and DEP's infrastructure build-out totals \$796 million. DEP has developed a four-pronged approach to improve conditions in the area and we are starting to deliver both immediate and long lasting relief for many residents and businesses.

**WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

The Plan projects a \$2.6 billion capital investment for the upgrade, reconstruction, or replacement of components of the wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations. Included in the Plan is \$220 million to upgrade the digesters at the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, which will more effectively break down organic matter. These efforts also include commitments to Zero Waste and the Mayor's 80x50 initiatives.

**HARBOR WATER QUALITY**

Under the Long Term CSO Control Plans, DEP will be investing at least another \$4.4 billion to make further CSO reductions over the next 25 years. The Plan includes \$1.5 billion for planned consent-order work related to the Long-Term Control Plans for combined sewer overflow. In 2017, NYS DEC approved seven of the City's plans, with two additional plans under review. Two of these plans call for enormous CSO storage tunnels beneath Brooklyn and Queens to reduce further overflows into Flushing Bay and Newtown Creek.

Each one of us plays an important role in protecting public health and the environment in New York City, and I'd like to thank you all for your hard work and dedication to our critical mission. The entire budget testimony can be viewed [here](#).

**DELAWARE AQUEDUCT REPAIR**

Work progresses on schedule, and on budget, for the \$1 billion Delaware Aqueduct repair, which includes the construction of a 2.5 mile bypass tunnel that will be drilled 600 feet below the Hudson River from Newburgh to Wappinger. DEP began tunneling last year, and expects to make the connection to the existing tunnel in 2022.

**CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3, STAGE 2: BROOKLYN-QUEENS LEG**

The plan includes \$600 million to complete the Brooklyn-Queens leg of City Water Tunnel No. 3, which includes funding to construct two new shafts in Queens. In December 2017, DEP brought the Brooklyn-Queens leg of the tunnel to a state of activation readiness.

**SEWERS**

The plan for FY19-22 projects \$2.6 billion of spending on sewers, which includes:

- \$916 million to replace sewers (storm, sanitary, or combined), including the Mayor's initiative for accelerated replacement
- \$1.6 billion to construct new sewers (of all types), of which

*Spotlight on Safety*

**National Ladder Safety Month**

March is [National Ladder Safety Month](#). This is a great opportunity to review policies, training, and equipment for the ladders that are used in your workplace. Falls from portable ladders (step, straight, combination, and extension) are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. In OSHA's Top Ten Most Frequently Cited workplace safety violations of FY2017, ladders were ranked number six.

Slips, trips, and falls are significant contributors to work place accidents involving ladders. Accidents can occur due to:

- wrong ladder selection for the task at hand

- improper climbing techniques
- defective ladders

Whenever employees work from heights, it must be ensured that the job is done safely. Begin by deciding how the job will be done, what tasks will be involved, and what safety equipment may be needed to complete each task. Before starting a task, the employee should always carry out a pre-use check to spot any obvious visual defects to make sure the ladder is safe to use.

For additional information on ladder safety visit [OSHA Portable Ladder Safety](#).

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it's okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau's EHS liaison how they can help. If you've still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It's DEP's responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we'll not only get the job done, we'll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH [PIPELINE](#). HELP IS ON THE WAY.

## The Importance of Early Intervention



A note from **Kaitlyn Maceira**, LMHC, CASAC, with the NYC Employee Assistance Program (NYC EAP)

One thing we know about prevention is that it is most effective when done early. However, one thing we may not realize about mental health is that many mental health issues have an early onset. Half of people diagnosed with bipolar disorder experience their first episode by age 25; 75% of people with schizophrenia experience their first episode between the ages of 16 and 30; the age of onset for anxiety is 11; and in terms of depression, if one's

first depressive episode occurs when they are a teenager, it is more likely that that person will experience recurrent episodes of depression throughout their life. These are more than enough reasons to prove why early intervention and prevention are so important. Mental Health First Aid has identified that it takes, on average, 10 years for a person to seek help for their mental health even though research has shown that the longer the delay between the onset of mental illness and the start of treatment, the less likely a person is to recover. So how do we fix this? Well, we educate ourselves. We learn about mental health issues, we learn how to identify them, and we learn how to get ourselves and others help. If you, or someone you know, is struggling, or may be struggling with mental health issues, free and confidential support and assessments are available through the NYC Employee Assistance Program. Contact us by phone at (212) 306-7660 or email at [eap@olr.nyc.gov](mailto:eap@olr.nyc.gov).

## Welcome Aboard!



Last week, 68 new BWSO City Park Workers attended orientation and received an overview of the department from Deputy Director for Human Resources **Herb Roth**, Director of Planning and Recruitment **Grace Pigott**, and HR Specialist **Grace Franco**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

## Kudos Corner



Several BWT staff were honored with prestigious awards for their outstanding work and service by the New York Water Environment Association during the 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting last month. **Zainool Ali** (Plant Chief, Newtown Creek) and **Courtney Anderson** (Plant Chief, Jamaica) were awarded the Uhl T. Mann Award, which is given to operators who demonstrate excellence in plant operation and/or maintenance. **Paul Kiskorna** (Chief, Collections Facility-North) was awarded the Collection System Operator Award, which recognizes an individual for an outstanding contribution to the evaluation, rehabilitation, design, or construction of collection facilities. Please join us in congratulating them on this well-deserved recognition!

## New Signs for Coney Island Creek



DEP has recently installed new signs at stormwater (MS4) outfalls along Coney Island Creek in Brooklyn. The [new signage](#) was installed at eight locations to notify residents of the presence of an outfall and prompting them to contact 311 with an outfall ID number, should they observe discharge after a period of dry weather. This pilot is one of many efforts to continue water quality improvements in Coney Island Creek and was developed with input from the community after a series of workshops with the Coney Island Beautification Project, the SWIM Coalition, Partnerships for Parks, NY Aquarium, and meetings with Brooklyn Community Board 13.

**We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: [newsletter@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:newsletter@dep.nyc.gov).**