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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEP Announces Program for Bronx Residents to Earn General Education Diplomas (GED), As Part of Croton Filtration Plant Job Readiness Education and Training Initiative

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Emily Lloyd announced today another program in a series of initiatives to foster the hiring of Bronx residents during the construction of the Croton Filtration Plant. The Department has established a GED program in cooperation with Bronx Community College which will be open to Bronx residents who register at the Department of Environmental Protection Community Outreach Office. The program is intended to offer applicants who do not have a high school diploma the opportunity to obtain their degree – a requirement for inclusion in most labor unions. In connection with the Croton Plant, DEP has adopted voluntary hiring goals for local residents, and since work began on site in October 2004, 25% of workers on average have been Bronx residents and \$18 million in sales have been generated for Bronx businesses. The program is expected to commence its first class in February 2007.

Commissioner Lloyd said, “We are pleased that Bronx Community College has agreed to administer the GED education program. It is our goal to see that as many Bronx residents as possible work on this historic project. In cases where residents do not have the necessary diploma or skills, DEP is increasing its efforts to make this and other opportunities for further education available. In combination with our recently announced partnership with Project H.I.R.E., and with other education and training initiatives that we have offered in the past -- and will offer in the future – this program will augment our capacity to help Bronx residents gain employment.”

Job applicants are invited to visit the Croton Filter Plant Community Outreach office, located at 3660 Jerome Avenue, Bronx, New York. Candidates will be interviewed and asked to fill out an application that will be reviewed by the Croton office staff. In cases where an applicant does not meet the high school graduation requirement, they will be offered enrollment in a 12-week course at the Croton Community Outreach Office given by Bronx Community College staff. Depending upon space availability, applicants

MORE INFORMATION

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may be referred to Project H.I.R.E. where a GED program is also available. Those participants who successfully complete the course and pass the GED exam will be awarded GED diplomas. In some cases, qualified applicants may be referred to apprenticeships and other training programs.

When it comes on-line in 2011, the Croton Filtration Plant will treat water from the oldest portion of the City's water supply system. Water from the Croton system meets current Federal and State health standards. However, construction of the Croton plant was undertaken in anticipation of new, more stringent regulations and because Croton water experiences periodic problems related to its source – a heavily developed watershed located in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties. The majority of the City's water comes from watersheds in less densely developed counties west of the Hudson. New York City is one of only five large cities in the country that provide water of such high quality that they are not required to filter. The City received authorization to build and operate the Croton Filtration Plant at the Mosholu Golf Course driving range in Van Cortlandt Park, which will be restored after the project is complete. In exchange for the use of this parkland, \$220 million generated from water and sewer revenues has been committed to improvements to Bronx parks and recreational facilities over the next five years.

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 plants, 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.