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**Statement from DEP Deputy Commissioner for Water Supply Paul Rush
at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Draft Consent
Order Public Hearing on June 19, 2012 Concerning DEP's Treatment of
Turbidity in the Ashokan Basin**

"I am Paul Rush, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Water Supply for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. I appreciate the opportunity to make a statement this evening. DEP is fully committed to meeting the terms of the draft Consent Order which is a critical step to ensure that DEP can maintain the high quality of drinking water for consumers both in New York City as well as over a million people in counties outside of the City. DEP has already taken steps towards meeting a number of requirements, including filing a draft application to modify its SPDES permit which will enable DEC to commence the environmental review process. That process will afford all stakeholders an opportunity to comment on what DEC and DEP propose to study under the EIS as well as comment on the action studied in the EIS.

A key element of the Order is incorporation of the Interim Ashokan Release Protocol (dated October 18, 2011). DEC developed the protocol to govern operation of the Ashokan Release Channel. This establishes objective criteria for making releases. While the Interim Protocol does provide for continued use of the Release Channel under certain conditions, it imposes many new restrictions on the timing, duration and volume of releases. It also requires DEP to make clean water community releases and flood mitigation releases, both of which decrease total water supply system storage and potentially impact water supply system yield. Over the past three months we have been making exclusively community releases from the reservoir. We feel the Interim Protocol is a compromise in an effort to balance the interests of all stakeholders, including downstream communities and consumers who depend on the water supply. For those of you that favor lower reservoirs during the time of year when flooding looms, sending water to the City through the Catskill Aqueduct or releasing water into the lower Esopus are the only ways to do that. However, sometimes the release water will be turbid, sometimes it will not. Please keep in mind that this year's experience was an extreme one since Hurricane Irene was a record storm event. Most years, absent an extreme turbidity event, DEP will be able to achieve the voids in the Interim Protocol by using the Catskill Aqueduct in a normal way which will reduce releases throughout the year.

DEP is committed to working with all stakeholders to seek reasonable solutions to the concerns that have been raised. The issues are complex and there are no easy answers. All stakeholders – including communities along the Lower Esopus, recreational users of the region's resources, farmers, and the consumers who depend on the water supply – have legitimate interests that we are interested in hearing and will be considered. We believe the Environmental

Impact Statement required by the Consent Order will provide important information that will help guide decision making as we work together to find solutions. Thank You.”

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. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and others professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$49 million payroll and \$132 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, 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 with a planned \$14.7 billion in investment through fiscal year 2021 that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep , like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater , or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nycwater.

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