



## **Environmental Protection**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Statement of Environmental Protection Commissioner Strickland and Finance Commissioner Frankel Reminding Homeowners of May 17 Deadline to Avoid Lien Sale By Entering Into Payment Agreement**

#### **Outreach Events and Noticing Have Produced Full Payment or Payment Agreement for Nearly Half of Eligible Properties**

#### **Statement of Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland**

“DEP would like to remind New York City homeowners who have overdue water and sewer charges that they have until this Thursday, May 17, to arrange for payment of outstanding debt before the City sells all liens on their property. We understand that these are tough times for many homeowners, and DEP is committed to working with customers to settle all outstanding charges. That’s why we offer payment agreements with \$0 down and a repayment period lasting from one to 10 years. When the City sells a lien, it is not selling the property—rather the lienholder purchases the right to collect money previously owed to the city. However, if the property owner does not ultimately pay what is owed, the lienholder may begin formal foreclosure proceedings. We don’t want this to happen to anyone, and through outreach together with the Department of Finance we have reduced the number of properties eligible for the lien sale by nearly half. The City strongly encourages any homeowners who have not already done so to either pay their outstanding balance in full, or enter into a payment agreement by this Thursday’s deadline.”

#### **Statement of Finance Commissioner David M. Frankel**

"If your home is at risk of having a lien sold on it due to missed payments for property tax, water or emergency repair charges, May 17 is your last day to pay before we sell your debt to a third party. We understand these are difficult times and we want to do everything we can to help you protect your property. You may still enter into a payment agreement to avoid additional charges and fees. If you are a senior, veteran or disabled you may be eligible for an exemption. To find out more visit [www.nyc.gov/liensale](http://www.nyc.gov/liensale) or visit one of our business centers. We are currently operating on extended hours to accommodate as many property owners as possible."

## **Background**

Under legislation passed in 1996 and amended in March, 2011, the City has the authority to sell liens to a third party in a process called a lien sale. The 2012 process began on February 12, and since then the City has conducted 22 outreach events throughout the five boroughs to instruct homeowners on the options available to avoid having their debt sold. In February, over 22,000 properties were noticed as being eligible for the lien sale, a number which was reduced by nearly half as a result of outreach.

The following properties are at risk of being sold in the lien sale:

- Two- and three-family homes, residential co-ops, and condos with \$1,000 or more in property taxes and other property charges three years or more;
- Mixed-use Class 1 two- and three-family homes with \$2,000 or more in water and sewer charges outstanding for a year or more;
- Tax Class 2 multi-family homes with \$1,000 or more in water and sewer charges, outstanding for one year or more; and
- All commercial properties with \$1,000 or more in tax, water and sewer, and other property charges outstanding for a year or more.

To schedule an appointment at one of DEP's borough offices or to find out how to enter into a payment agreement for outstanding water and sewer charges, please call [\(718\)-595-7000](tel:7185957000) or visit DEP's website at [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep). To get information on entering into an agreement with the Department of Finance for outstanding tax and other property charges, or to make a payment, visit [www.nyc.gov/liensale](http://www.nyc.gov/liensale).