



Environmental Protection

Deputy Mayor Holloway and Commissioner Strickland Announce Completion of Catskill/Delaware Ultraviolet Treatment Facility for Drinking Water

\$1.5 Billion Facility is the Largest in the World and Will Provide Added Protection for Drinking Water in New York City and Portions of Westchester County

Deputy Mayor Cas Holloway and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced the completion of the world's largest Ultraviolet (UV) Treatment Facility. Ultraviolet light is a relatively new and revolutionary method for treating drinking water and the \$1.5 billion Catskill/Delaware UV Facility will provide an added layer of protection against pathogens and other harmful microorganisms for the drinking water consumed by more than 9 million residents of New York City and portions of Westchester County. The 270,000 square-foot facility is designed to treat more than 2 billion gallons of water each day, more than three times the capacity of the next largest municipal UV treatment facility in the United States, which is currently under construction in Los Angeles. Since 2002, the Bloomberg Administration has invested well over \$10 billion in water supply and distribution infrastructure to ensure the livability of the city for present and future generations.

“Like the Delaware and Catskill aqueducts before them, the opening of the largest ultraviolet disinfection system in the world is the first milestone in the fundamental transformation of New York City’s water supply led by Mayor Bloomberg over the past decade,” said Deputy Mayor for Operations, Cas Holloway. “New York’s water is the best in the world, and now every gallon that travels from the upstate watershed to the City will be treated with ultra-violet light, providing an extra level of protection to the 9 million people and businesses that rely on our water supply every day. This long-term investment will ensure that New Yorkers can rely on their fresh, clean, great-tasting water supply for generations to come.”

“More than 9 million New Yorkers rely on DEP to provide more than a billion gallons of high quality drinking water every day of the year, and the UV facility will play a key role in helping us fulfill that mission,” said Commissioner Carter Strickland. “Mayor Bloomberg has made historic investments to ensure that our water supply remains pristine and the UV facility will provide an added layer of protection to ensure that, like the rest of the city, our drinking water is world class.”

“Access to clean, safe water is essential to ensuring the health of all New Yorkers,” State Health Commissioner Nirav R. Shah, MD, MPH, said. “This UV facility will play a major role in protecting the water supply that serves millions of residents of New York City and regions within Westchester County.”

“The Health Department works closely with DEP to certify that New York City tap water is safe and healthy through water sampling, disease surveillance, and inspections,” said New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley. “This new facility will ensure New York City’s water remains clean, pure, and safe to drink for years to come.”

“This award-winning project demonstrates the pinnacle of ingenuity and creative engineering,” said Jay Simson, President of the American Council of Engineering Companies of New York. “The state-of-the-art facility will improve the health and wellbeing of New York City through a cost-saving, efficient method. The partnership of DEP and key engineering firms provided a successful platform to deliver this project and paves the way for improved water treatment on a global scale.”

The new UV facility will provide treatment specifically for *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*, naturally occurring microorganisms that can be found in surface waters and can cause gastrointestinal ailments in humans. As a result of increased awareness following a 1993 *Cryptosporidium* outbreak in Milwaukee, new federal regulations for treating drinking water were created due to the fact that *Cryptosporidium* is resistant to disinfection with chlorine. Through a series of studies conducted in the late 1990s by the Water Research Foundation, with funding contributed by New York City, researchers discovered that exposing water to low levels of ultraviolet light was effective at rendering *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* harmless to humans.

New York City recognized the value behind the scientific studies and took a proactive approach by committing to build the UV facility in 2002, prior to the establishment of a new U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that required such treatment for

surface water supplies. Construction of the Catskill/Delaware UV Facility commenced in 2006, it began treating water in late 2012, and construction is now substantially complete. As drinking water passes through the facility it is exposed to UV light that destroys the genetic code of the microorganisms, rendering them unable to reproduce or cause infection. The facility has 56 UV units, each of which contain 210 lamps, for a total of 11,760 UV bulbs.

Cryptosporidium and Giardia are naturally occurring but are found at only very low levels in New York City's water supply, thanks in part to the more the more \$1.5 billion DEP has invested in its watershed protection programs since first receiving a Filtration Avoidance Determination from the EPA in 1993. DEP's watershed protection programs include the operation and support of advanced local wastewater treatment infrastructure, the promotion of sustainable farming practices, targeted land acquisition, and responsible land use regulations. New York City is one of only five large cities in the country permitted to run a largely unfiltered drinking water supply, due in large part to these comprehensive watershed protection programs.

DEP supplies approximately 1 billion gallons of drinking water every day to more than 9 million people in New York City and upstate communities, including roughly 400,000 residents of Westchester County. To ensure the drinking water is safe and of the highest quality, DEP performs more than 1,000 daily tests on the water taken from nearly 1,000 sampling locations throughout the five boroughs. This is in addition to the 260,000 tests performed annually throughout the watershed.

The Catskill/Delaware UV Facility is located in the towns of Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh, in Westchester County. Construction included the installation of more than a mile of cement-lined 12 foot diameter pipe, 10,000 linear feet of steel pipe, the largest UV units ever manufactured at the time, 1,200 tons of structural steel, 20,000 square feet of aluminum grating, and 121,000 cubic yards of concrete. Work also included improvements to the existing Delaware Aqueduct, approximately 500 feet below ground, which required months of nightly shutdowns of the aqueduct. The project created roughly 750 construction jobs and more than 40 permanent jobs.

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 \$68 million payroll and \$153 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 over \$13 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dep, like us on Facebook at facebook.com/nycwater, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/nycwater.

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