



New York City Wins 2012 Platinum Award for Water Excellence

Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies Recognizes Department of Environmental Protection's Outstanding Work to Provide Millions of New Yorkers with Clean Drinking Water

New York City Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland today announced that DEP has been awarded the 2012 Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) Platinum Award for utility excellence. AMWA is an organization of the nation's largest publicly owned drinking water utilities. Its members provide safe and clean drinking water to more than 133 million Americans. The Platinum Award recognizes outstanding achievement in implementing the *Attributes of Effective Utility Management* – nationally recognized industry standards that focus on product quality, customer satisfaction, employee and leadership development, operational optimization, financial viability, infrastructure stability, operational resiliency, community sustainability, water resource adequacy, and stakeholder understanding and support. The award was presented to Commissioner Strickland on Monday at the AMWA's 2012 Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon.

"DEP is committed to making cost-effective and sustainable investments to ensure our system operates efficiently and to incorporating new technologies that will benefit our customers," said Commissioner Strickland. "As the nation's largest municipal water utility we are honored to be recognized by our peers as an industry leader in providing high quality drinking water to millions of people and for making smart investments in both grey and green infrastructure that will ensure clean waterways for future generations."

"AMWA's 2012 award winners are industry-leading water systems with innovative managers and dedicated workforces who create sustainable utilities marked by high quality, affordable water, responsive customer service and attention to resource management and environmental protection," said AMWA President Pat Mulroy, General Manager, Las Vegas Valley Water District. "The accomplishments of these exceptionally well-run public utilities should be a source of pride for the communities they serve."

DEP was honored for implementing its groundbreaking Strategic Plan, Strategy 2011-2014. The far-reaching strategic plan sets the stage for agency-wide improvement and metrics-driven performance to

meet four strategic goals and lays out 100 distinct initiatives that will ensure DEP is the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. AMWA honored DEP's efforts to improve the maintenance of its infrastructure through management initiatives including H2OStat meetings with senior and front line managers and the Operational Excellence initiative to identify cost savings. Through targeted allocation of resources and equipment DEP has optimized its maintenance operations, calibrating pressure zones in the water distribution system to produce a 25% reduction in water main breaks in Fiscal Year 2012. In addition, DEP has undertaken a review of its assets under a comprehensive asset management program, which informs a planned 10-year, \$14 billion investment in capital projects to ensure a robust system. Water supply investments include the \$2.1 billion Water for the Future Program which will repair the Delaware Aqueduct and the completion of the Third Water Tunnel.

In addition, DEP was recognized for the installation of Automated Meter Reading technology which has reduced the cost of reading meters by \$3.4 million annually, and has proven to be an invaluable customer service tool. Thanks to Automated Meter Readers DEP customers can track their daily water consumption online and better manage their water use. In addition, DEP now alerts customers to unusual spikes in water consumption through its Leak Notification Program. Since the Program was introduced in 2011, DEP's customers have saved more than \$12.5 million by detecting and correcting leaks that would have otherwise gone unnoticed until the customer's next quarterly bill.

Finally, DEP was honored for its expansive watershed protection program and for promoting recreational opportunities on City owned lands in the watershed. Since 2003, DEP has significantly expanded the amount of City-owned land within the watershed that is open for recreation. Currently, approximately 108,000 acres — more than double the amount available in 2003 — is open to the public. This comprises more than two-thirds of City-owned property in the watershed. Of the 108,000 total acres open for recreation, 75,000 are land areas and 33,000 are on water. Most of the City's newly acquired property is open to the public for activities such as hunting, hiking and fishing, as well as economic activities like hay cropping.

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. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels, and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP employs nearly 6,000 employees, including nearly 1,000 in the upstate watershed. 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.