

**Subject:** City Lifts Recreational Waterbody Advisory For New York Harbor; Department of Environmental Protection to Resume Installation of Siphons at Gilboa Dam



## **City Lifts Recreational Waterbody Advisory For New York Harbor**

### **99 Percent of City Wastewater Treatment Restored Less Than One Week After Sandy**

### **All NYC Wastewater Treatment Facilities Fully Operational Since November 10**

### **Two Weeks of Water Quality Testing Confirms NYC Waterways Safe**

New York City today lifted the harbor water advisory issued after Hurricane Sandy that directed New Yorkers to avoid activities that would bring them into direct contact with water from the Hudson River, East River, New York Harbor, Jamaica Bay and the Kill Van Kull. Water quality testing over the last two weeks confirms that these water bodies are safe for recreational use. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) takes regular water samples at 40 different locations throughout New York Harbor, for more detailed findings go to the [website](#). DEP and the New York City Department of Health will continue to monitor harbor water quality conditions to verify that these water bodies remain safe.

“The storm surge from Hurricane Sandy presented DEP with an unprecedented challenge, but thanks to the hard work of the men and women who operate our wastewater treatment plants and pumping stations, we were back up and running in short order,” said Commissioner Carter Strickland. “During the Bloomberg Administration alone, New York City has invested more than \$10 billion to improve harbor water quality and by quickly bringing our damaged plants back into service, our team helped ensure a quick recovery for New York’s waterways.”

The record storm surge that accompanied Hurricane Sandy submerged many of the City's wastewater treatment plants and their electrical equipment in seawater and degraded their ability to pump and treat wastewater. Ten of the City's 14 wastewater treatment plants and more than 40 wastewater pumping stations were damaged by Hurricane Sandy. DEP crews and contractors worked around the clock to pump out the seawater and make repairs to the electrical equipment. On November 3, just five days after the storm, DEP was treating 99 percent of all New York City wastewater. And, by November 10, DEP had restored full secondary treatment at all of its wastewater treatment plants and was treating 100 percent of dry weather flow. In addition to repairs at the wastewater treatment plants, DEP has restored service to more than 40 pumping stations throughout the five boroughs which has helped prevent the discharge of untreated wastewater into New York waterways, and prevented sewer backups. U.S. EPA maintains an [advisory](#) for areas of the Atlantic Ocean near Nassau County, including parts of the Rockaways.

Like many of the treatment plants, the Oakwood Beach Plant on Staten Island was cut off by Hurricane Sandy's storm surge the night of the storm. DEP's Sewage Treatment Workers, Engineers and Electricians worked through the night to protect the Plant's critical infrastructure. The workers at the plant were able to treat more than 80 million gallons of wastewater that would have otherwise been released into New York Harbor or backed up into homes and businesses.

Since 2002, New York City has invested approximately \$10 billion in wastewater treatment plant upgrades to increase treatment capacity and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSO). Capital investments have included the construction of four CSO storage facilities with the capacity to hold approximately 120 million gallons of wastewater until it can be properly treated. These storage facilities reduce CSOs by more than 2.7 billion gallons annually. Conservation methods and improved operational practices, such as lowering wet wells in anticipation of heavy storms and regular cleaning of interceptor sewers have also reduced CSO volumes. This past summer, DEP completed a two-year cleaning of the city's largest interceptor sewer pipes using vector trucks, removing more than 29 million pounds of debris and sediment and reducing CSO discharges by more than 100 million gallons annually. Since then, DEP has continued the process of inspecting and cleaning these sewers using other methods which have combined to remove an additional one million pounds of debris. CSOs have also become more dilute, with the percentage of

sanitary waste in CSO discharges decreasing from 30% in 1980 to approximately 12% today. Under the NYC Green Infrastructure Plan launched by Mayor Bloomberg in 2010, DEP will invest more than \$187 million over the next three years and an estimated \$2.4 billion of public and private funds by 2030 to reduce CSOs by capturing stormwater before it ever enters the city's combined sewer system.

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](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](http://www.twitter.com/nycwater).



## **Department of Environmental Protection to Resume Installation of Siphons at Gilboa Dam**

### **New siphons important component of \$400 million rehabilitation of Gilboa Dam**

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced plans to resume the installation of new siphons at Schoharie Reservoir, which will help regulate water levels in the reservoir and allow workers to finish rebuilding the Gilboa Dam. Siphons are steel pipes that draw water out of the reservoir over a barrier.

The three-week-long project will install at least one of two siphons to be added to the dam. Each siphon will be capable of releasing 250 million gallons a day from the reservoir into the Schoharie Creek, allowing DEP to better manage reservoir levels and provide added flood protection downstream. Currently, diverting water through the Shandaken Tunnel and into the Ashokan Reservoir or operating the newly installed crest gates are the only ways to lower water levels.

The new siphons are the latest step in a \$400 million full-scale rehabilitation project, which includes reinforcing the dam with 234 million pounds of concrete, reconstructing the spillway and installing a new release tunnel around the dam from the Schoharie Reservoir into Schoharie Creek. The siphons are an important component of the reconstruction plan because they allow DEP to lower water levels, providing workers with access to portions of the dam that would otherwise be obstructed by water. The siphons will also help DEP meet its commitment of lowering the reservoir for snowpack mitigation during winter months – a measure that aims to further reduce spring flooding.

To install the siphons and continue the dam rehabilitation, DEP must lower the elevation of water in the Schoharie Reservoir. On Saturday, DEP will increase the flow of water from the Schoharie Reservoir through the Shandaken Tunnel and begin operational releases from the Ashokan Reservoir. Both actions aim to reduce the water level at Schoharie Reservoir without unnecessarily increasing storage at the Ashokan Reservoir. DEP will run its Operational Support Tool on a regular basis – as often as daily – to gather data and enable the agency to minimize diversions from the Schoharie Reservoir and operational releases at Ashokan.

The diversions have been approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the operational releases are in compliance with the Interim Ashokan Release Protocol. DEP staff has reached out to state and local officials to inform them of the releases and pending construction work at Gilboa Dam.

Reconstruction of Gilboa Dam is expected to be finished in 2014, while the new release tunnel is expected to be complete in 2019. The Gilboa Dam was built from 1919 to 1927 and impounds the Schoharie Reservoir, the northernmost reservoir in New York City's Catskill water supply system.

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 approximately 750 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other 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 a planned \$13.2 billion in investments over the next 10 years that creates up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nycwater](http://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](http://www.twitter.com/nycwater).