

Weekly Pipeline

Commissioner Garcia testified about agency investments during a City Council budget hearing, including **\$351 million** towards upgrades to the **Hillview Reservoir**.

March 25, 2026

Commissioner's Corner



Lisa F. Garcia

Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to testify before Councilman **James Gennaro** and members of the Environmental Protection, Resiliency, and Waterfronts Committee. I was joined by Chief Financial Officer **Nerissa Moray**, Acting Chief Operating Officer **Tasos Georgelis**, Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs **Beth DeFalco**, and other members of the executive team. We discussed The Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2027, The Preliminary Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2027–2030 and The Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report.

Before testifying, I offered a few reflections which I also wanted to share here:

Perhaps by next year I'll sound more like a seasoned DEP bureaucrat, but right now I still feel like a true fan of this Department and the extraordinary people who make it work. Like so many New Yorkers, I have spent my entire life drinking

That is DEP every single day: thousands of dedicated professionals working behind the scenes to provide essential services that most New Yorkers never have to think about.

NYC water — and yes, flushing my toilet — without giving it a second thought.

Even as someone who has spent a career as an environmental lawyer, I hadn't fully appreciated the remarkable fact that most of our system is unfiltered, fed by our protected upstate watersheds, and reliably delivers some of the best drinking water on the planet.

But now — one month into my new role — I have a much deeper appreciation of the engineering marvel that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, so that all of us can turn on the tap and flush a toilet without worry.

Our mostly unfiltered water supply travels through an extraordinary system that is an engineering marvel: snowmelt fills our reservoirs, water flows through tunnels and aqueducts under the Hudson River and through additional reservoirs before it enters Tunnels 1, 2, and 3 and finally branches into the water mains beneath every street in this city.

And behind all of that are 6,000 DEP employees making it work. Engineers and scientists who ensure the system flows precisely as it should, and who test our water thousands of times along its journey. More than 200 DEP Police officers patrol and protect our watershed lands to keep the supply pristine. Construction teams and project managers are constantly upgrading and improving infrastructure. Inspectors and attorneys ensure compliance with state and federal regulations. Wastewater teams operate treatment plants and anaerobic digesters, nurture the little bugs that break down our waste, and make sure that



what is returned to our waterways is clean.

While we slept through the nights, waking up to beautiful snowy days last month, DEP crews were out repairing water main breaks and supporting the city's storm response by shoveling snow. Meanwhile, our administrative staff, HR, and public affairs kept the wheels running. That is DEP every single day: thousands of dedicated professionals working behind the scenes to provide essential services that most New Yorkers never have to think about.

Of course, we face real challenges. "Flushable" wipes that aren't truly flushable. Idling trucks and noise nuisance in neighborhoods. More intense storms send more stormwater into our pipes, sometimes overwhelming the system. Sea level rise and storm surges are flooding our coastal neighborhoods more frequently.

Yet with every challenge, I've already seen how DEP teams rise to the occasion — innovating, adapting, and designing solutions to protect our drinking water and improve quality of life. From expanding green infrastructure, to advancing stormwater reduction initia-

tives, to establishing the Bureau of Coastal Resiliency, DEP is proactively preparing the city for the future.

For all of that, I want to publicly thank everyone at DEP for supporting our mission.

And because this was a budget hearing, I also wanted to highlight an important fact: maintaining and upgrading our unfiltered water system saves ratepayers billions of dollars by avoiding the need for a filtration plant — making New York City the only major city in the United States able to claim both this level of savings and this level of water quality.

I am in awe of the NYC water system, and my goal is for everyone to share my awe of it. When the system was built, we understood the challenge and rose to the occasion. Now, we have a responsibility to maintain this system and continue delivering for future generations.

As the new Commissioner, I am honored to stand alongside our workforce and to advocate for the resources they need to maintain and modernize this system, and to meet the challenges of the 21st century. [Click here to read the full testimony.](#)

Commissioner Tours Avenue V



Photo Left to Right: Frank Loncar, Joseph Miraglia, Akimu Garuba, Commissioner Garcia, Eric Lochner, Deputy Commissioner Angela De Lillo, Chris Falcon, Frank Kulscar, Elio Paradis, Kristen Murphy, Jonathan Hoffman, and Jason Giammarino

On March 16, the Bureau of Wastewater Treatment (BWT) hosted **Commissioner Garcia** at the Avenue V Pump Station. This visit provided an opportunity to better understand the operational history of the facility, the intricacies of the current emergency pump-around system, as well as the associated repair costs and maintenance activities. Avenue V, which was designed in the Beaux-Arts architectural style, is a large pump station that serves both combined and sanitary sewers that pump to the Owls Head Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility interceptor system. Since December, the pump station has been undergoing repairs. During this period, teams from BWT operations and engineering have installed temporary pumps, reviewed current pump designs, and ordered new equipment to improve serviceability and ensure continuity of operations until work is completed this summer.

In the News



Last week, reporter **Greg Mocker** from WPIX-11 News was on hand as DEP handed out free home conservation kits from its office in Downtown Brooklyn to residents in the neighborhood. Mocker spoke with residents who received low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators that add air to the water, a toilet tank bank to reduce water used to flush, and leak-detector dye tablets to help find hard-to-see leaks. Across all five boroughs, 119 kits were successfully distributed during “Fix a Leak Week.” Special thanks to the staff from the bureaus of Customer Services and Public Affairs and Communications who helped with these special events. [Read all about it here.](#)

Social Media Highlight



Reporting from a sampling station in #Manhattan, DEP's Gabe Lopez finds out what's inside these mysterious boxes all over NYC. Want the full scoop on why our tap water hits different? Dive into the 2025 Water Quality Report here: nyc.gov/waterquality



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Spring Teacher's Conference



On March 10, DEP's Education Team hosted the annual Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Spring Teacher Conference at Solar One's new Environmental Education Center in Manhattan. Thirty teachers and education partners gathered to network and share education resources and trout-release field trip plans. Workshops were facilitated by the Watershed Agricultural Council, Trout Unlimited's NYC Chapter, and Urban Park Rangers from NYC Parks. Solar One also led a tour of the redesigned Stuyvesant Cove Park and surrounding floodwalls and gates, part of the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project. A special thank-you to DEP's new TIC Coordinator, **Mackenna Hackimer**, for hosting the event, as well as to **Robin Sanchez** and **Helene Amato**.

Welcome Aboard



On Monday, 15 employees attended orientation and received an overview of the Agency from our Human Resources Generalist, **Harold Kim**. We hope everyone will join us in welcoming them to DEP!

Wahida Dipty, Elaine Ho, Zandile Mnyobiso, Tyler

Ramoutar, and Dhara Shah, BWT; Jennifer Carr, Mame Ndiaye, and Orena Wong, BWS; Rose Garner and Kendra Dennis, BCS; Antonios Milatos, BEDC; Awymarie Riollano, FMC; Megan Abron, MOCEJ; Persida Diaz, ODHR, and Preezma Subedi, BWSO.

Out of the Archives



One hundred years ago, an excavation exposed the remains of Aaron Burr's Manhattan Company well on Reade St. This well provided residents with foul-tasting and impure water until the 1833 cholera outbreak inspired a plan for New York City's first public water supply from a clean upstate source. You can view more images from the [DEP Archives on Flickr](#).

St. Patrick's Day Parade



DEP staff joined neighbors, friends, family, and partners on Saturday at the Yonkers St. Patrick's Day Parade down McLean Avenue. The street was aptly renamed "The Emerald Mile," and sits in the shadow of nearby Hillview Reservoir, where water from upstate flows into New York City's taps. This was the first year DEP had an official contingent in the Yonkers St. Patrick's Day Parade, with 25 DEP members participating, including staff from the Bureau of Police and Security, including the

honor guard unit, the Bureau of Water Supply, and the Bureau of Engineering Design and Construction. DEP has significant infrastructure in Yonkers, including Hillview, which on average provides 90 percent of the water used in the five boroughs, as well as about half the water used in Yonkers. Hillview Reservoir is currently undergoing a \$1.3 billion capital investment upgrade, and DEP is also in the process of constructing a new police precinct on McLean Avenue along the parade route.

Connecting with Vendors



Last Thursday, DEP Deputy Chief Finance Officer **Elisa Velazquez** and Chief Contracting Office staffers **Gloria Rodriguez** and **Edward Espinoza** attended the annual General Contractors Association of New York's MWD/BE/SDVOBs Opportunity Outlook Expo at Club 101 in Manhattan. This exclusive event is designed to connect certified

Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses (MWBs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs) with contract opportunities and create pathways for collaboration and mutual success. Elisa Velazquez presented and spoke about DEP's continued efforts to collaborate with the community and vendors at the event.