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Resolution to Protect NYC Watersheds and Hold Down NYC Water Rates

Be it resolved that to cease the escalation of NYC water and sewer rates and to protect NYC water supplies, our Community/Borough Board calls upon New York City, NYC Council and NYC Water Board to:

1. Secure federal and state stimulus money to fund mandated capital improvements of upgrading Croton Watershed wastewater treatment plants to tertiary level, and safe disposal of the sludge;
2. Fund capital costs for water supply, wastewater disposal, and treatment facilities from the NYC Capital Budget rather than from the regressive Water and Sewer rates;
3. Cease making the water system pay for street cleaning, fire hydrant maintenance and other functions that the City General Expense Budget should rightly fund. The Independent Budget Office's May 2008 brief identifies costs that can be reduced or are wrongly charged against the water rates including higher fringe benefits accounting (\$19 million), debt service savings from delays to non-essential projects (\$17 million), and holding code 499 (\$94 million);
4. Eliminate annual rental payments by the City to its Water Board (currently \$178 million and expected to increase further) and return the current payment of \$147 million;
5. Cease the practice of setting rates before the City adopts its budget. Support legislation A03250 <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A03250> sponsored by Assembly Member Mark Weprin and passed annually since 2001 in the Assembly;

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6. Support efforts to ease impacts of high water rates on senior homeowners and tenants by passing legislation A07059 <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A07059> which would provide a tax levy subsidy to households 65 or older with incomes below current Senior Citizens Homeowner Exemption eligibility limit;
7. Improve Water and Sewer billing policies;
8. Have NYCDEP address the ongoing waste of over 1.2 million gallons a day of groundwater at the Croton filtration plant site in Van Cortlandt Park;
9. Improve NYCDEP's obligation to keep in a state of good repair existing storm and combined sanitary-storm systems to prevent recurrences of summer 2007 backups into Queens' homes and apartments;
10. Have NYCDEP disclose all capital costs for infrastructure maintenance and new infrastructure both current and over the next 10 years (including Delaware Aqueduct leak; dam upgrades, tunnel #3, etc.);
11. Ban inappropriate gas and oil drilling in NYC Watersheds;
12. Have NYCDEP enforce regulations to prevent unsuitable development in the NYC Watershed and allow only "lake friendly" fertilizers without phosphorus;
13. Have NYCDEP invest in more land purchases and conservation easements in the Croton Watershed as the most cost-effective and best source water protection of Bronx and Manhattan water supplies.

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