



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Department of Environmental Protection and American Water Resources Offer Homeowner Service Line Protection Programs

ANDREW J LANZA January 11, 2013

### *Optional Programs Will Shield Homeowners from Unexpected Cost of Repairs to Private Water and Sewer Lines*

New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Carter Strickland and American Water Resources (AWR) President Malcolm D. Conner today announced the launch of the water and sewer service line protection programs for residential properties throughout the five boroughs. Property owners in New York City are responsible for maintaining their water and sewer service lines, which are buried underground and run from a building to the City-owned mains under the street. On average, it costs property owners between \$3,000 and \$5,000 to repair a water line break and between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to repair a sewer line break in New York City. Homeowners may enroll in the program and pay a monthly fee to cover potential service line issues.

“The service line protection programs are a key component of our ongoing effort to provide the best possible customer service,” said DEP Commissioner Strickland. “By informing property owners about their responsibilities and providing an optional and affordable way to protect them from unexpected repair costs, the Programs offer a valuable service to our ratepayers throughout the City.”

“American Water Resources has been providing similar protection programs to homeowners in Long Island and other parts of New York State for more than 10 years, and we are proud to now provide a customized protection program for homeowners in New York City,” said Malcolm D. Conner, President of American Water Resources.

To help property owners better manage these risks and the high costs of service line breaks, the New York City Water Board issued a Request for Proposals from qualified providers for service line protection programs in 2012. After a thorough review, AWR was awarded a contract to administer the service line protection programs for roughly 670,000 eligible properties in New York City.

Water customers may participate in the service line protection programs at a present rate of \$3.99 per month for water line protection and \$7.99 per month for sewer line protection. For future years, the New York City Water Board will approve annual rates for the service line protection programs at the same time it adopts DEP water and sewer service charges. Customers who choose to join the programs may elect to protect both their water and sewer lines, or one or the other. They may also discontinue their involvement with the programs at any time if they no longer wish to participate. Further information about the programs and how to join will be mailed to eligible property owners beginning today, and is available online at [www.AWRUSA.com/NYC](http://www.AWRUSA.com/NYC) or by calling 1-888-300-3570.

The service line protection programs provide unlimited protection for covered repairs from normal wear and tear and basic restoration of affected property. They will also provide for an unlimited number of claims, 24/7 customer service, and quick response time by NYC-Licensed Master Plumbers who are pre-qualified to perform needed repairs. For the convenience of those who choose to participate, there are no claim forms to submit and no deductibles, and the protection programs fee will be itemized and included on each participating customer's regular DEP water and sewer bill.

At no cost to the City and an affordable cost to the customer, AWR will fully manage the protection programs – from educating homeowners about their responsibility to maintain their water and sewer service lines, to establishing a local contractor network and providing 24-hour customer service. AWR’s local contractor network is comprised of NYC-Licensed Master Plumbers, including their affiliated staff of over 200 local workers, who will be on-call to respond to the service line issues of participating customers.

In addition to managing the service line protection programs for New York City, AWR also provides Water Line Protection, Sewer Line Protection, and In-Home Plumbing Emergency Programs to homeowners in 35 states, and AWR currently services nearly one million contracts. A subsidiary of American Water, AWR has been providing service line programs to homeowners for more than ten years and has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.

Establishment of the Service Line Protection Programs is a key component of DEP’s *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to help make it the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. DEP is the largest municipally owned water and wastewater utility in the United States. DEP manages New York City’s water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality 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 has 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](https://www.facebook.com/nycwater), or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/nycwater](https://www.twitter.com/nycwater).

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