



Post Office Box 265
The Bronx, New York
10464-0265
www.bceq.org

July 29, 2015

Marc Gerstman, Acting Commissioner
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Water
625 Broadway, 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-3507

Re: Letter of Support for the City of New York: Water Quality Improvement Program for the mapping of MS4 Parkland Outfalls

To Whom It May Concern:

As an ongoing partner and collaborator with the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation, the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) is pleased to express our enthusiastic support of their grant application for this historic opportunity.

Formed in 1971, BCEQ has sought to establish — as an Inherent Human Right — a sound, forward-looking environmental policy regarding an aesthetic, unpolluted, environment protecting a natural and historic heritage. Since 2001, we focused on developing connections to and along the Harlem River and created on-water access and activities in an effort to improve water quality. We formed the Harlem River Working Group and received technical assistance from National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. In 2011, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) announced efforts on seven pilot locations -- the Bronx & Harlem River Watersheds (New York) were chosen because both “locations had a strong restoration effort underway, spearheaded by local governments and community organizations.”

Over the years, we collaborated with NYC Parks on projects, including the WCS-NOAA project at Pier 5 and the NYS Brownfields Opportunity Area project Step 1 and 2, both on the Harlem River. We support NYC Parks proposal to remove Tibbetts Brook from the Combined Sewer Overflow pipe and daylight sections of that stream — the first project of its kind in New York City. Tibbetts Brook in Van Corlandt Park is part of the Harlem River Watershed.

We are proud to recommend them as diligent, effective partners in advancing the social and environmental agendas of creating healthier communities and more productive and sustainable environments. This project will provide valuable environmental, social and ecological improvements along with critical flood protection, water quality enhancements, and new found recreational and educational opportunities in the Bronx, as well as the rest of the city.

BCEQ applauds the forward looking vision of the Parks Department to develop this MS4 Parkland Mapping project and promise, as a community-based organization, to be actively engaged as needed.

Sincerely,

Karen Argenti

Karen Argenti
Co-Chairs, Water Committee, BCEQ

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