



**The ARAMARK Tower
1101 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107-2994**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City's Water Remains Safe: Water Dept. Continues to Monitor Oil Spill

Philadelphia, PA -- The Philadelphia Water Department continues to monitor the oil spill on the Delaware River as a precautionary measure to protect the intake of its Baxter Water Treatment Plant. The Plant provides drinking water to 60 percent of the population of Philadelphia, as well as portions of Lower Bucks County. Rain on Wednesday helped move the oil spill further south on the river away from the Plant intake. As of Thursday, December 2, the oil spill was approximately three miles below the intake.

Since the oil spill occurred, the Water Department has adjusted its drinking water treatment process, adding powdered activated carbon, as a precautionary measure. The carbon will absorb oil compounds in the unlikely event that any would get through the intake. All sample results for volatile organic compounds have been negative. It has not been necessary to deploy a boom or close the Plant intake.

The Samuel S. Baxter Plant is the largest of Philadelphia's three water plants and processes approximately 180 million gallons of water a day. The other two plants have not been affected as they withdraw water from the Schuylkill River. If necessary, the Water Department has the ability to reroute water from other plants to serve other parts of the city.

At the height of the spill, the Water Department's Industrial Waste Unit reported to the Coast Guard's Emergency Operation Center to ascertain the severity of the spill and provided details to the Baxter Plant. Industrial Waste inspectors also continue to monitor the situation closely.

In addition, the Water Department's Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant took necessary steps to adjust its wastewater treatment process since it could not barge its sludge down the Delaware River to the Biosolids Recycling Center. The carefully managed wastewater treatment process enabled the Plant to discharge its effluent (treated wastewater) safely to the river while meeting all environmental standards. During this time, the Northeast Plant was able to store its sludge in an empty digester tank until it received permission from the U.S. Coast Guard to resume barging. Sludge from the Northeast Plant is barged six to seven days a week to the Biosolids Composting Center. The Water Department owns two barges, the Resources and the Recycler. Each barge holds approximately 800,000 gallons of sludge. One barge a day transports sludge to the Center. The Northeast Plant's actions prevented the Department from discharging sludge directly to the river, which would have further compromised the water quality of the river and wildlife.

Deputy Water Commissioner of Operations Debra McCarty commends the excellent performance of the Department's quick response to the oil spill. "We hope an incident

like this never happens, but we do extensive planning and training in case it does. Our efforts have been successful thanks to the commitment and dedication of many water and wastewater professionals in the Philadelphia Water Department. They succeeded in protecting our water supply and from preventing any additional pollution to the Delaware River.”

###