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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prevent Street Flooding: Keep Storm Drains Clear of Ice and Snow

As temperatures begin to rise later this week, Water Commissioner Bernard Brunwasser asks Philadelphia residents to remove snow piled in front of the storm drains. "As the snow begins to melt, it's important to make sure that storm drains on your block are clear, allowing the runoff to flow freely to the drains.

Water Department crews continue to clean trash and debris from the drains, and to remove ice and snow that are blocking access to them. "Getting to all 75,000 storm drains around the City before the weather warms up will be a daunting task. That's why we are asking residents to help shovel snow and ice away from the storm drains," explains Commissioner Brunwasser.

Brunwasser also reminds residents not to use storm drains as garbage cans. Leaves and other debris can cause real problems since anything but rainwater and snow melt can clog the drains and the grates that cover them. When it rains or when snow melts, the water has no place to go. Either way, residents can end up with flooded streets.

Every day, debris finds its way to the city's storm drains. Tires, street litter, plastic bags and junk pose major problems for storm drains. Others, like used motor oil, old car batteries, paints, household and garden chemicals – even dog droppings – pollute our local streams and rivers, as many of the City's storm drains flow directly to these waterways.

Here are a few tips to prevent street flooding and reduce pollution to these waterways:

First, know where the storm drains are on your block. Most city streets have drains on the corners and in the middle of the block. Keep them clear of snow and ice after snow storms.

Second, do the right thing with trash and debris. If more people would "bag it, can it, or recycle it" we wouldn't have nearly as much street flooding. Call the Water Department at 215-685-6300 to arrange to have clogged storm drains cleaned.

Third, dispose of household wastes properly. Some service stations will take your used motor oil. Or, dispose of household wastes at one of the Streets Department's Household Hazardous Drop-off Events. Check out the schedule at www.phila.gov/streets or call the Streets Department at 215-686-5560.

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