



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FINANCE COMMISSIONER DAVID M. FRANKEL AND DEP COMMISSIONER CAS HOLLOWAY ANNOUNCE INTENT TO SELL TAX AND WATER LIENS UNLESS DEBT IS RESOLVED BY MAY 7**

***80% OF PROPERTIES ON LAST YEAR'S 90-DAY WARNING LIST AVOIDED A LIEN SALE***

**PAYMENT PLANS, EXEMPTIONS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED HOMEOWNERS AVAILABLE**

New York City Finance Commissioner David M. Frankel and Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway announced today that the Department of Finance will send notices to 24,963 owners at risk of having a lien sold on their property to a private collector. A list of all at-risk properties was published in today's *New York Post* as well as community newspapers throughout the City. It is posted online at [nyc.gov/liensale](http://nyc.gov/liensale).

Properties whose owners qualify for the Senior Citizen Homeowner Exemption or the Disabled Homeowners Exemption for property taxes will be removed from the list of at risk properties. Property owners can also take advantage of payment plans to avoid a lien sale. Last year, 80 percent of properties on the 90-day warning list avoided a lien sale by entering into a payment plan, seeking an exemption or correcting our records.

"I urge all at-risk owners to contact Finance to apply for an exemption, correct our records, or work with us to make a payment," said Finance Commissioner Frankel. "It is important to have a level playing field, and for all property owners to share the cost of providing the City's vital services."

"I encourage property owners to pay outstanding debt as soon as possible or to enter a payment plan, or they risk having a lien sold on their property," said Commissioner Holloway. "It's important all New Yorkers pay their fair share to supply and distribute the best drinking water in the country, and to treat the 1.2 billion gallons of wastewater that the City produces every day."

The number of at-risk properties increased slightly from 2009, when 24,111 properties received a 90-day notice. However, the total amount of outstanding debt owed this year, \$454.3 million, is smaller than the \$591 million listed last February.

Owners of at-risk properties will receive 90-day warning letters this week notifying them that the City intends to sell their tax and/or water debt to a private collector unless they resolve their debt by May 7. Finance and DEP will work with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the City Council and other groups to conduct outreach events in each borough to provide one-on-one assistance to at-risk owners.

Owners of small homes, residential co-ops and condominiums are at risk if they are delinquent on property taxes for three years or water debt for one year, provided the debt is at least \$1,000. Owners of other properties are at risk if they are delinquent for more than one year and owe at least \$1,000.

Some types of properties are exempt from the lien sale. Finance will not sell liens on properties that receive the Senior Citizen Homeowner Exemption or the Disabled Homeowner Exemption, both administered by the Department of Finance. At-risk owners who believe they may qualify for one of these exemptions should call 311 immediately.

Also, DEP will not sell liens on 1-family homes if they owe water debt but not property tax debt. However, DEP will be required to terminate water service if owners of 1-family homes do not resolve their water debt.

Payments can be made online, at any of Finance's Borough Business Centers or by mail, regardless of where the property is located. Payment plans for water and property related charges are available, but owners must sign agreements and make down payments by May 7 to avoid the lien sale.

Water and sewer payments can also be made at any time by calling toll free 866-622-8292 or online by visiting [www.nyc.gov/dep](http://www.nyc.gov/dep) and using the link to Pay Your Bill Now. DEP accepts MasterCard, AMEX and Discover and EFT payments. You may visit any DEP borough office regardless of where the property is located or mail your payment to NYC Water Board, P.O. Box 410, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008. Finance's Borough Business Centers will accept DEP payments.

To ensure timely processing, Finance advises owners *not* to make payments by mail after April 28.

Owners who need help resolving their debt or believe that the City's records are incorrect should contact Finance or DEP immediately. Information is available at [nyc.gov/liensale](http://nyc.gov/liensale) or by calling 311. Lien sale information will be available online soon in Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. The first five outreach events have already been scheduled. They will be held at the following locations from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm:

- March 4, 2010 – 3030 Third Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Bronx
- March 11, 2010 – 350 St. Marks Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Staten Island
- March 18, 2010 – 144-06 94<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Queens
- March 25, 2010 – 66 John Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Manhattan
- April 8, 2010 – 210 Joralemon Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Brooklyn

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