

New York Water Fact Sheet



New York State is known for its abundant water resources and natural beauty. The Finger Lakes, the Great Lakes, and Niagara Falls attract thousands of visitors each year and provide the state with water for household, business, and industrial use. At the same time, the state is home to the bustling metropolis of New York City, with the sizeable water needs that one would expect from the largest population hub in the United States.



Water Sources

Approximately one quarter of New Yorkers get their water from groundwater sources. The remaining demand is largely filled by surface water. Lakes Ontario and Erie supply the area around the cities of Rochester and Buffalo, respectively. Smaller lakes and streams supply other areas.

New York City is home to the largest engineered water system in the nation, supplying more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to approximately 9 million people, representing half of the state's population. The city draws its water from reservoirs upstate, supplied by a 1,900-square-mile watershed—that's about the size of Delaware.

Such extensive systems require substantial efforts to maintain. New York has 30,000 miles of aging sewer and water treatment systems that

will require significant investment in repairs and upgrades during the next two decades. If New Yorkers use water more efficiently, it will help reduce these infrastructure investments.

Conservation Efforts

In 1989, New York built water conservation into its legal system by adopting legislation that required applicants for water distribution permits to document their water conservation efforts.

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection has partnered with WaterSense® to promote awareness of the WaterSense label and water conservation by distributing program materials at public outreach events and the Union Square Greenmarket farmers' market. And on the commercial side, the New York City Water Board offers a rate reduction for buildings that reuse a large percentage of their water.

At the consumer level, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection offers free residential water surveys to residents to identify leaks and measure the flow rates of water-using devices.

New York City also invested \$393 million in a 1.6-gallon-per-flush toilet rebate program, which reduced water demand and wastewater flow by 90.6 million gallons per day, representing a 7 percent savings. The rebate program saved \$605 million by creating a 20-year delay before water supply and wastewater-treatment expansion projects are required.

Across the state, even more can be done to save water. If just one out of every 10 households in New York replaced its older, inefficient toilets with WaterSense labeled toilets, it would save nearly 8 billion gallons and more than \$46 million in water bills annually. That's more than four hours' worth of flow over the Niagara Falls! And if every household in New York replaced its showerheads with WaterSense labeled models, it could save about 17 billion gallons of water annually, representing \$100 million in water bills and more than \$180 million in energy costs for heating the water saved each year.

For more information and water-saving tips, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Increasing Conservation Statewide

The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYSEFC), a WaterSense promotional partner, provides low-cost financing and technical assistance to municipalities, business, and state agencies. Since New York needs such extensive water infrastructure renovation, NYSEFC stresses water conservation to reduce the need for and costs associated with the maintenance and operation of that infrastructure.

The corporation presents the importance of water conservation and steps that can be taken to increase conservation to audiences ranging from students at the State University of New York at Albany to state agency staffers. For example, NYSEFC promoted Fix a Leak Week, sponsored by WaterSense, to New York hardware stores and consumers. In addition, NYSEFC replaced Suffolk County Community College's aging toilets with WaterSense labeled models, reducing the institution's water demand by 50 percent.

