

NYC Build it Back Water Bill Credit

What is the “NYC Build it Back Credit”?

The “NYC Build it Back Credit” is part of the larger effort by the City of New York to accelerate Hurricane Sandy recovery by providing financial relief to impacted homeowners. The “NYC Build it Back Credit” is a \$750 credit applied to a homeowner’s water and sewer bill. The credit is meant to offset the minimum charge applied to certain accounts during time period of November 1, 2012 and June 30, 2014.

What is a minimum charge?

DEP imposes a minimum charge on water and sewer usage when consumption is below a predefined minimum threshold. This charge is imposed on all properties regardless of occupancy. Immediately after the storm, there were many homeowners who had to vacate their homes for an extended period of time because of damages to the home caused by Hurricane Sandy. Although they did not consume water, properties that remained connected to DEP water service during their time away incurred a nominal minimum charge to their DEP account. The “NYC Build it Back Credit” relieves this additional financial burden so that homeowners can continue on their road to recovery.

Who is eligible for the credit?

Property owners who needed to vacate their homes during the period of November 1, 2012 and June 30, 2014 for an extended period of time due to unsafe or uninhabitable conditions caused by Hurricane Sandy and have had a minimum charge applied to their account are eligible for the “NYC Build it Back Credit.” Property owners who have already received relief through DEP’s suspension of bills due to service terminations as a result of the storm are not eligible for this credit.

How did you know who is eligible for the credit?

DEP and the Mayor’s Office of Housing Recovery Office identified property owners who sustained significant damage to their property as a result of Hurricane Sandy and needed to vacate their homes for a significant period of time between November 1, 2012 and June 30, 2014.

A wide range of information is being examined including: data from DEP, the Office of Emergency Management, the NYC Department of Buildings, and from New York City Build it Back Damage Assessors to determine that damage occurred to the home due to the storm.

I did not receive a credit but I believe I am eligible. What should I do?

If you think you are eligible, please call the Build It Back Customer Service Line at (212) 615-8329 or e-mail housing@recovery.nyc.gov. The Mayor’s Office of Housing Recovery and DEP will review those properties and add those that meet the criteria to the list of eligible homeowners.



NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS
Member of Assembly 64th District

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August 8, 2013

Hon. Carter Strickland
Commissioner
New York City Department of Environmental Protection
59-17 Junction Boulevard
Flushing, NY 11373

Dear Commissioner Strickland:

We have each contacted you with regard to an increasingly straining issue for our shared constituents. Many survivors of Hurricane Sandy are now facing bills from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) charging them for water usage while their homes were vacant and unattended. We have yet to receive a response on how your agency plans to rectify this situation. Once again, we implore that you work with us on a creative plan to get this done.

We are well aware of the need for DEP to charge a daily fee to fund maintenance of connections throughout the system. However, it is our understanding that many residents in the Hurricane Sandy disaster area are now faced with water bills, not of a mere nominal fee, but three and four-figure sums. We have already expressed that these residents are not in an ordinary state of financial security. The city's *Build It Back* program is just now starting, leaving thousands of homeowners still unsure of where they stand.

It is simply unconscionable to require payment for a service that was unused during a time of crisis. It is imperative that you consider the impact this has on the big picture for those it affects. Many are faced with decisions on where to apply their extremely limited resources, and this impending debt may cause them to cut costs in other areas.

We urge DEP to consider a waiver for those still working their way toward the ability to pay, as well as a corresponding reimbursement for those who have already paid. The impact of this problem is becoming greater everyday as these residents move forward with rebuilding. We must come to an agreement on how to help them as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Assembly

James S. Oddo
Council Minority Leader

cc: Hon. Alan Moss, Chairman, New York City Water Board
Hon. Cas Holloway, Deputy Mayor for Operations
Hon. Howard Wolfson, Deputy Mayor for Governmental Affairs & Communications