

**Testimony of the New York Housing Conference**

**New York City Water Board  
Concerning the Board's Rate Schedule**

**May 29, 2025**

Good afternoon. My name is Brendan Cheney. I am Director of Policy and Operations at the New York Housing Conference (NYHC). I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment about the proposed water rate increases.

NYHC is a nonprofit affordable housing policy and advocacy organization. As a broad-based coalition, our mission is to advance City, State and Federal policies and funding to support the development and preservation of decent and affordable housing for all New Yorkers.

We have been concerned about the increases in water rates in recent years and their impacts on multifamily housing and tenants' rents. The 3.7% proposed increase is less than half of what we had expected based on information from the Water Finance Authority earlier this year, which is somewhat of a relief. Operators of affordable housing in New York City are facing sharp increases in operating expenses while the income levels of many tenants have not increased. Keeping water rate increases as low as possible is critical to support affordable housing building owners and tenants.

We support the proposal to increase funding for the Multi-Family Water Assistance Program. For the past several years, the number of applicants for the program far exceeded the number of households that could be funded through the program. While \$16.25 million will still not fully fund the demand, the ability of the program to assist 17,000 more apartments is appreciated.

We also encourage the administration to not collect rent payments from the water rates to fund the city's general fund. Putting a portion of water rates into the general fund is unnecessary and can drive up rate increases. In the future, we hope the administration will do what the previous administration did and not collect the rental payment.

We urge DEP to keep talking with the affordable housing community as we try to meet the need for affordable housing and a safe water supply.