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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND SPEAKER QUINN ENCOURAGE SMALL BUSINESSES,
HOMEOWNERS AND INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NYC
PENALTY RELIEF PROGRAM**

*Three-Month Program Allows for Resolution of Many Outstanding Environmental Control
Board Violations without Paying Late Penalties or Interest*

More than 700 Applications in the First Week of the Program

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn today encouraged small businesses, homeowners and individuals to take advantage of the NYC Penalty Relief Program, which eliminates late penalties and interest on eligible, outstanding Environmental Control Board debt for those that apply to pay their base fine amount before December 21st. The three-month penalty relief program, which began this week, could reduce debts owed by as much as 67 percent for some businesses, homeowners and individuals. Examples of eligible past due violations include violations for illegal curb cuts, illegal posting of bills, failure to maintain a clean sidewalk and building code violations. Parking tickets and moving violations are not a part of the program. The NYC Penalty Relief Program was proposed by Speaker Quinn in her State of the City address in February and was signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg in July.

“We are providing an opportunity for a small business or homeowner to take advantage of potentially significant relief and resolve some debt that may have built up during challenging economic circumstances,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “The program fits into our Five Borough Economic Opportunity Plan, which focuses on easing financial burdens and removing barriers, so businesses and individuals can navigate through the national recession.”

“In tough financial times, we can’t afford to make things harder on small businesses by burying them in late penalties and interest,” said Speaker Quinn. “That is why penalty relief is at the center of the City Council’s ‘Open for Business’ plan, a package of common sense initiatives that will help our small business community to weather this recession. This program is truly a win-win, helping businesses and homeowners get out of debt while bringing millions of dollars into City coffers.”

(more)

“This program will allow small businesses and homeowners to resolve Environmental Control Board debt without paying late penalties or interest,” said Department of Finance Commissioner David M. Frankel. “It pays to pay now, because fines can triple if they are not addressed.”

“The program is a collaborative effort amongst a number of City agencies to create an opportunity to help those in debt clear up violations at a reduced cost,” said Director of the Mayor’s Office of Operations Jeff Kay. “With City agencies working together, applicants can resolve many different types of violations in one easy sweep.”

To resolve Environmental Control Board debt without paying late penalties and interest, applicants can visit the Department of Finance’s website at www.nyc.gov or call 311 and provide their name and address. The Finance Department will send eligible participants a list of their applicable violations, the amount owed and the amount that can be saved by resolving the debt during the penalty relief program. Participants must sign an agreement waiving their right to contest the violations.

Violations must have been in default before May 1, 2009, in order to qualify under this program.

Applicants with violations that require correction must submit proof of the correction before the debt can be resolved. Applicants will be informed of any violation that requires the condition to be corrected, along with instructions for how to prove the condition has been resolved.

Applying to participate in the program will not commit an applicant to resolving all outstanding violations, but any violations not resolved by December 21, 2009 will remain in effect and subject to late penalties and increasing interest, as well as enforcement action. In addition, other City agencies may withhold licenses and permits from businesses that have outstanding debt.

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