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## News

# Roadside Sound Meter and Camera that is Activated by Loud Mufflers Now Sending Notices to Vehicle Owners

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The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that a small pilot program is underway that includes the use of a roadside sound meter and camera to capture evidence of vehicles emitting noise in violation of New York State's Vehicle and Traffic Law and the City's Noise Code.

"Vehicles that emit obnoxious levels of noise in violation of state and city law have become a top quality of life concern for many New Yorkers and this technology offers some real promise in helping us to provide some relief for our neighbors," **DEP Commissioner Rit Aggarwala** said. "We will monitor the pilot program closely and if it continues to show promise, we will look to expand it in the coming months."

The sound meter and camera are installed adjacent to the roadway and are activated when they detect a noise at a distance of 50 feet or more that registers at or above 85 decibels. At that point a video is captured of the vehicle emitting the noise. DEP noise enforcement staff review the videos and mail a Notice to the owner of the vehicle. Currently, the Notice directs the owner to bring the vehicle to a DEP facility for an inspection to ensure it is in compliance with state and city noise requirements. Penalties under the program can range from \$220 for a first offense to \$2,625 for a repeated default. The camera is posted approximately 15' above the roadway and thus the only identifying information captured on the video is the vehicle's license plate. The program complies with the City's Privacy Protection Policies.

DEP has been authorized to issue violations directly from the evidence gathered from the camera and sound meter, and forego the inspection, and that may begin this spring. In addition, state legislation increasing the penalties for loud mufflers was signed into law at the end of 2021. Thus, the above

penalty range will be increasing in March. Evaluations of the pilot program will include its effectiveness in reducing 311 reports of loud vehicles and equity and fairness in any impact to vehicle owners.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing approximately 1 billion gallons of high-quality drinking water each day to nearly 10 million residents, including 8.8 million in New York City. The water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, comprising 19 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,500 miles of sewer lines and 96 pump stations take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. DEP also protects the health and safety of New Yorkers by enforcing the Air and Noise Codes and asbestos rules. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](https://www1.nyc.gov/dep), like us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter.