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City taps \$30M for upstate water safety

By AL GUART

City officials have signed off on a \$30 million plan to further secure the New York water-supply network and to increase testing for biological and chemical agents, The Post has learned.

The deal includes additional security staff, new surveillance cameras and alarms, motion sensors, better lighting and improved fencing at the dams and reservoirs that supply the city's drinking water.

A high-tech device that would warn of the pres-



ence in the water of any biological agents, such as anthrax or botulism, also will be purchased as part of the plan.

The deal was inked just five days after The Post reported how the city had not acted on many of the recommendations of a 1997 report on the security of the New York watershed.

The 125-page report concluded the city's

water-supply system had "inadequate security" and was "vulnerable to a wide array of threats."

The Post has learned many of the issues highlighted in the report are addressed in the "memorandum of agreement" signed by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers, who will design and complete much of the work.

"It's a substantial new endeavor that we're very pleased about to enhance security," said DEP Chief of Staff Charles Sturken.

Army Corps spokesman Peter Shugert also confirmed the deal, which allows the corps to sign contracts on the city's behalf with federally approved security firms to carry out the improvements under a cloak of confidentiality.

"We have agreed to lend some design expertise and security upgrades to the New York City water-supply system," Shugert said.

"We're ready to move forward, and already have in some areas."