

Overview of Federal and State Beach programs under the Federal Beach Act, and the Clean New England Beaches Initiative

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Clean New England Beaches: “It’s a Shore Thing”

- **Goal:** To protect public health by reducing beach closures in New England, with appropriate and consistent, high quality monitoring
- **Why:** Coastal and freshwater beaches were closed or posted more than 2400 days in summer of 2001
- **How:** Federal Beach Act provided funding (nationally over \$10 million annually) to Coastal States for monitoring, assessment and public notification activities



Problems at urban beaches mostly sewer and storm water related

Green Harbor Beach, New London CT



Problems at suburban beaches mostly related to storm water as well as alteration of natural streams, which have been integrated into the storm water infrastructure



Beverly, MA



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The BEACH Act of 2000

Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act
(Section 406 of the Clean Water Act)

- Consistent Criteria and Standards for Coastal Recreational Waters
 - States need to adopt EPA criteria (i.e. enterococci) for pathogen indicators within 42 months (2004)
- Performance Criteria for Beach Monitoring, Assessment and Notification (The Beach Guidance Document)
- Grants to develop and implement State Coastal Beach Monitoring Programs
 - State programs must be consistent with Performance Criteria
 - A funded mandate



What Beach Act funds do

- Monitor water quality at beaches
- Classify beaches based on an assessment of sources of pathogens
 - perform sanitary surveys
 - Create a tiered classification and monitoring plan
- Notify the public of water quality conditions consistent with EPA's nine performance criteria -- all states have met performance criteria
- But, Beach Act does not fund correction or remediation
- With increased monitoring, assessment data and establishment of monitoring database, however, states can now target resources to identify sources of bacteria that close beaches



Control non-point and storm water pollution sources that contribute to beach closures

- Eliminate human fecal contamination of storm water
- Major component of NPDES storm water permit -- 6 minimum controls include elimination of illicit discharges



Keeping the pressure on communities with chronic beach closures

- “Recently it has come to our attention that the Town Beach has been closed to swimming on eight days this summer due to elevated levels of indicator bacteria. We strongly believe that chronic beach closures should be investigated, identified and corrected. One of the goals of EPA’s Clean New England Beach Initiative is to assess the sources of bacteria that cause closures, and to ensure that sources of fecal contamination discharged to bathing waters are eliminated.....
- “Enclosed with this letter is some information that may assist you with your efforts to identify and eliminate the sources of bacteria that are causing these beach closures. <http://www.epa.gov>.....
- “We would like to know what additional efforts you are making to ensure that people can swim in clean water atyour town’s beaches...
- ***Sincerely, Robert Varney, Regional Administrator***



Flagship Beaches



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We've seen some success, based on total number of coastal beach closure days in New England

State	2001	2002	2003	2004
CT	195	97	200	
ME	16	5	0	15
MA	647	503	559	
NH	0	0	3	
RI	530	76	380	77
Totals	1388	681	1142	



Success story -- Wollaston Beach Quincy, MA



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Success story -- Warren Town Beach, RI



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