

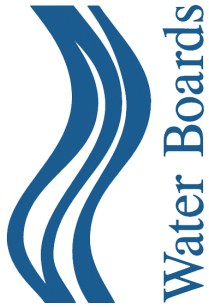


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STATE WATER BOARD WILL CONSIDER TEMPORARILY FUNDING BEACH WATER TESTING TO PROTECT SWIMMERS' HEALTH

SACRAMENTO— The State Water Resources Control Board will examine alternative funding sources so the state can continue a pioneering effort to test and monitor water quality at California's most popular beaches during the busiest times of the year.

Because of the downturn in the economy and state revenues, it is not possible to reimburse counties from the state's General Fund as has been done in previous years. Because of his concern for protecting water quality and beach-goers' health, the Governor has asked the Water Board to investigate other funding sources for the monitoring program. The five member State Water Board will consider temporarily paying the costs out of previously approved Proposition 13 (2000) bond funds that are dedicated to improving water quality at the state's beaches. The Water Board will consider a proposal at its next regular meeting in Sacramento on November 4th.

"I value the recreational and environmental aspects of our beaches and I am proud that the Water Boards, in cooperation with local governments have done a great job cleaning up beach pollution," said Water Board Chair Tam M. Doduc. "This will be a decision for the full board, but we are all aware that progress must be backed up with rigorous test results. We know there is still the threat of contaminated water and there are still some beaches where there has not been enough progress. That is why testing is so important for the health of swimmers, surfers and young children who splash in the waves."

California Water News

In previous years, the approximately \$1 million Beach Safety Program of the Department of Public Health (DPH) was used by DPH for grants to local agencies for beach water quality testing programs from April 1st through Oct 31st each year (the months of highest swimming activity). The actual tests are conducted by the counties along the coast. California has pioneered extensive (in many cases daily) testing and spends far more of its own money to protect beach-goers' health than do other coastal states. (The U.S. EPA does provide some testing money, but not enough to maintain thorough testing along California's long coast.)

"We are responding to the Governor's request to find alternate funds because he is determined that California will continue to have the finest and safest beaches in the country. They are part of our heritage and a gem in our environment," said Chair Tam Doduc.

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