

## THE STATE IS SET TO SPEND BUCKS ON THE REGIONS BEACHES

By Thomas Grillo | June 19, 2018



Dan Gauvain, Nahant DPW, removes driftwood from a beach in Nahant ahead of March's nor'easter. (File Photo | Owen O'Rourke)

BOSTON — Revere and Nahant are set to get their share of a \$900 million budget for the state's natural resources.

But two members of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission questioned whether that amount is enough, given decades of neglect of the state's resources.

The chief of the state agency responsible for 450,000 acres of parks, historic sites, and beaches told lawmakers his department will likely be level-funded next year.

Leo Roy, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) commissioner, acknowledged there's more than \$1 billion in deferred capital maintenance in the pipeline. He said it will take years of planning and design, not to mention the extra cash, to make all the improvements. Without the money in hand, DCR must prioritize the dollars it spends, he said.

First, he said, safety precautions are job one, followed by providing access for people with disabilities, and construction

of seawalls to protect waterfront homes and streets.

Roy testified before the 23-member Metropolitan Beaches Commission on Beacon Hill this week as they reviewed DCR's work. The panel was created by the Legislature to monitor 15 Greater Boston beaches managed by DCR. It is comprised of elected officials and community leaders from the region's beachfront communities.

Roy touted nearly \$12 million in capital infrastructure projects, including \$355,000 in equipment expenditures for Nahant and Revere for repair and clean up from three March storms.

"It was a wicked winter," he said. "The triple storms caused damage up and down the coast."

Robert Tucker, president of the Friends of Lynn & Nahant Beach, praised DCR for new benches and trash receptacles for the beaches and keeping up with the removal of algae.

But he asked Roy to replace the rusted handrails along the waterfront from

Nahant to Swampscott that pose a danger. He also pressed for sidewalk and stair repair.

Carol Haney, a Revere resident, lauded DCR staff for cleaning the beaches while she takes her daily walk at 6 a.m. She asked about the status of replacing the restrooms which has been promised for more than a decade; requested signs prohibiting dogs on the beach be replaced since they are unreadable; and asked that trash be picked up twice a day instead of just once.

"Revere Beach is one of the busiest beaches in Massachusetts," she said.

Mayor Brian Arrigo was on hand to say his administration is putting the finishing touches on documents to commence construction on the bathrooms.

Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn) encouraged Roy to continue the cleanup of algae along the beaches, which cause terrible odors.

"I understand we can't take our eye off the ball," Roy said. "We collect it, remove it, and dispose of it offsite, and will continue to do so."

State Rep. RoseLee Vincent (D-Revere) said perhaps the most important thing DCR can do is rake Revere Beach every morning. She said people sleep on the beach and often drug paraphernalia that endanger beachgoers is left behind.

"I know DCR rakes the beach two or three times a week," she said. "But it really needs to be done daily for everyone's safety."