

The Daily Item

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STATE OKS \$150K FOR ALGAE CLEANUP

THOMAS GRILLO | May 30, 2017



Lynn and Nahant's beaches should smell a lot sweeter this summer, thanks to a decision by the Baker administration to spend \$150,000 for algae cleanup.

In an effort to balance the state budget, Gov. Charlie Baker trimmed the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) budget in December by nearly \$6 million. He also vetoed \$50,000 in spending that was earmarked for the weed removal. As a result, it appeared the deadly smell that has plagued the area's beaches would return.

But lobbying by the Lynn and Revere delegation and advocacy groups caused Baker to reconsider.

"The governor is very supportive of algae removal and we will continue to do it and figure out a way, as a department, to cover the cost," said Susan Hamilton,

DCR's director of park operations.

On the chopping block was a DCR-funded algae removal program that has been in place for more than a decade. It operates from April through November in Lynn and Nahant. DCR trucks collect the algae from the beaches and deliver it to a landfill.

At a packed hearing at Lynn Museum/LynnArts Tuesday, the Metropolitan Beaches Commission co-chairs Sen. Thomas M. McGee (D-Lynn) and Rep. RoseLee Vincent (D-Revere) hosted an evening to discuss beaches in Lynn, Swampscott, and Nahant.

In an interview prior to the session, McGee said he is certain that lobbying and meetings with Baker administration staff was essential in getting the administration to reverse course.

State Rep. Lori Ehrlich (D-Marblehead) who had joined McGee to secure annual funding for beach cleanup, said the algae removal is a quality of life issue.

But not all the news was good. Kelly Coughlin of Stony Brook Partners reported the findings of King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott for water quality to be among the lowest in the region with a grade of 83 percent for swimming. In contrast, two South Boston beaches consistently scored at the top of the list with perfect scores of 100 percent.

Bruce Berman, a spokesman for Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, credited McGee, Vincent, the Friends of Lynn & Nahant Beach, state Reps. Lori Ehrlich (D-Marblehead), Dan Cahill (D-Lynn) and Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn) for working to maintain DCR's budget.