

Save Harbor/Save Bay Issues Report On Water Quality at Area Beaches in '16

By Patriot-Bridge Staff

The environmental advocacy organization Save the Harbor/Save the Bay released their annual Beach Water Quality Report Card on the Metropolitan Region's public beaches on Friday, May 26, 2017 – just in time for Memorial Day weekend.

The report card is based on water quality data collected during the 2016 beach season on 15 public beaches in 10 communities, including Lynn, Swampscott, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy and Hull.

“This year's report card contains good news for many of our beaches,” said Save the Harbor's spokesman Bruce Berman. “However 2016 was a very dry year, with just 5.3 inches of rain and one large storm with over one inch of rain compared to the 10.2 inches we had in 2015 and the 13 inches of precipitation we expect in a typical beach season. Though the annual results are important, an analysis of all the data we have collected since 2011 tells a more complete story.”

As you can see from the chart, two beaches in South Boston consistently top the list, with perfect scores of 100%, while five area beaches, in South Boston, Winthrop, and Revere receive grades of 95% or better. Six area beaches consistently earned scores in the low 90's or high 80's, while King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott and Tenean Beach in Dorchester are consistently at the bottom of the list with scores below 85%.

“Despite their low scores, there is good news for King's Beach and Tenean Beach this year” said Berman. “Our preliminary analysis suggests that recent investments by Boston Water and Sewer and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority have begun to reduce pollution at Tenean Beach, which is good news for Dorchester beach goers.”

Moreover, said Berman, with the support of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the advice of the King's Beach Science Advisory Committee (BSAC) and the cooperation of the City of Lynn and the Town of Swampscott, Save the Harbor has installed rain gauges and flow meters at King's Beach to help those communities evaluate and address the persistent pollution problems that close that beach nearly one in five days in a typical year.

Later this year, the BSAC will issue a report to pave the way for capital investments by the Commonwealth to help these communities accelerate the pace of planned improvements.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay would like to thank EEA Secretary Matthew A. Beaton for his support of this project, and Dr. Judy Pederson and Dr. Jim Shine, Co-Chairs of our Beaches Science Advisory Committee for their guidance in developing the methodology we use in this report. We would also like to thank David Wu of the MWRA, DCR's Dennis Fitzgerald, Kelly Coughlin of Stony Brook Partners, Ben Wetherill of Coastal Sensors, and Save the Harbor policy intern Alicia Zhao and Data Analyst Diana Acosta for their help with this report.

Thanks as well to Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chairs Senator Thomas M. McGee of Lynn and Rep. RoseLee Vincent of Revere and each of the legislative and community members of the Commission for their commitment to clean water and the region's public beaches from Nahant to Nantasket.

For more information about the methodology used in preparing this Report Card please visit www.savetheharbor.org/Content/beachesreportcard/ or contact Bruce Berman by email at bruce@bostonharbor.com or on his cell at 617-293-6243.