

The Daily Item

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TRÉA LAVERY | Sept. 10, 2021

Lynn Mayor and State Delegates Ask For Funds To Clean Up King's Beach



Red flags signifying that the water is not safe to swim in fly at King's Beach in Swampscott and Lynn. (Spenser Hasak)

BOSTON — Lynn Mayor Thomas M. McGee and the city's state delegates are asking that funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) be used to improve water quality at King's Beach.

At a hearing of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Friday, McGee, state Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn) and state Reps. Lori Ehrlich (D-Marblehead), Daniel Cahill (D-Lynn) and Peter Capano (D-Lynn) asked that some of the state's \$4.8 billion in federal funding be directed to finding a solution to the ongoing pollution issues at the beach.

"Since my time in Legislature which included chairing the Beaches Commission, I have been advocating for the need to identify

the root of the issue at King's Beach and subsequently work towards finding a solution to fix the problem," McGee said. "In order to do this, significant funding is necessary, as it was for the clean-up of Boston Harbor and beaches throughout the rest of the state. Lynn deserves to be prioritized to receive ARPA funding to resolve this environmental justice and public health issue on our coastline once and for all."

A water quality report card released in July by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay showed that King's Beach, located in both Lynn and Swampscott, has been ranked as one of the worst two beaches in the state for the past six years. The beach was unsafe for swimming more than one in five days in 2020.

"The bacteria at King's Beach harms our environment and puts the public's health at risk. With these ARPA funds, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fix this problem and restore beach access for Lynn and Swampscott residents," Crighton said.

Much of the pollution on King's Beach is due to twin stormwater outfalls from both Lynn and Swampscott. The outfalls are both contaminated by sewage due to aging sewer infrastructure in both communities, a problem that is exacerbated during wet weather.

"The only beach for a city of nearly 100,000 residents should not suffer

the indignity of being regularly fouled by sewer outflow," Ehrlich said. "The infrastructure fix for this problem, while dauntingly expensive, is known and not insurmountable with ARPA participation."

Capano said that it was "unconscionable" that the beach was unsafe so often last year, and expressed concerns that the problem was only going to get worse without intervention.

"With heavy rainfall like we saw in July, the number of days with high bacteria counts will no doubt be much higher," he said. "Working-class residents in Lynn, many of whom don't have air conditioning, should be able to cool off and enjoy the beach on a hot day without the fear of getting sick. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with ARPA funding to finally address this issue. If we are serious about updating our century-old, crumbling infrastructure, this is the first place we should start."