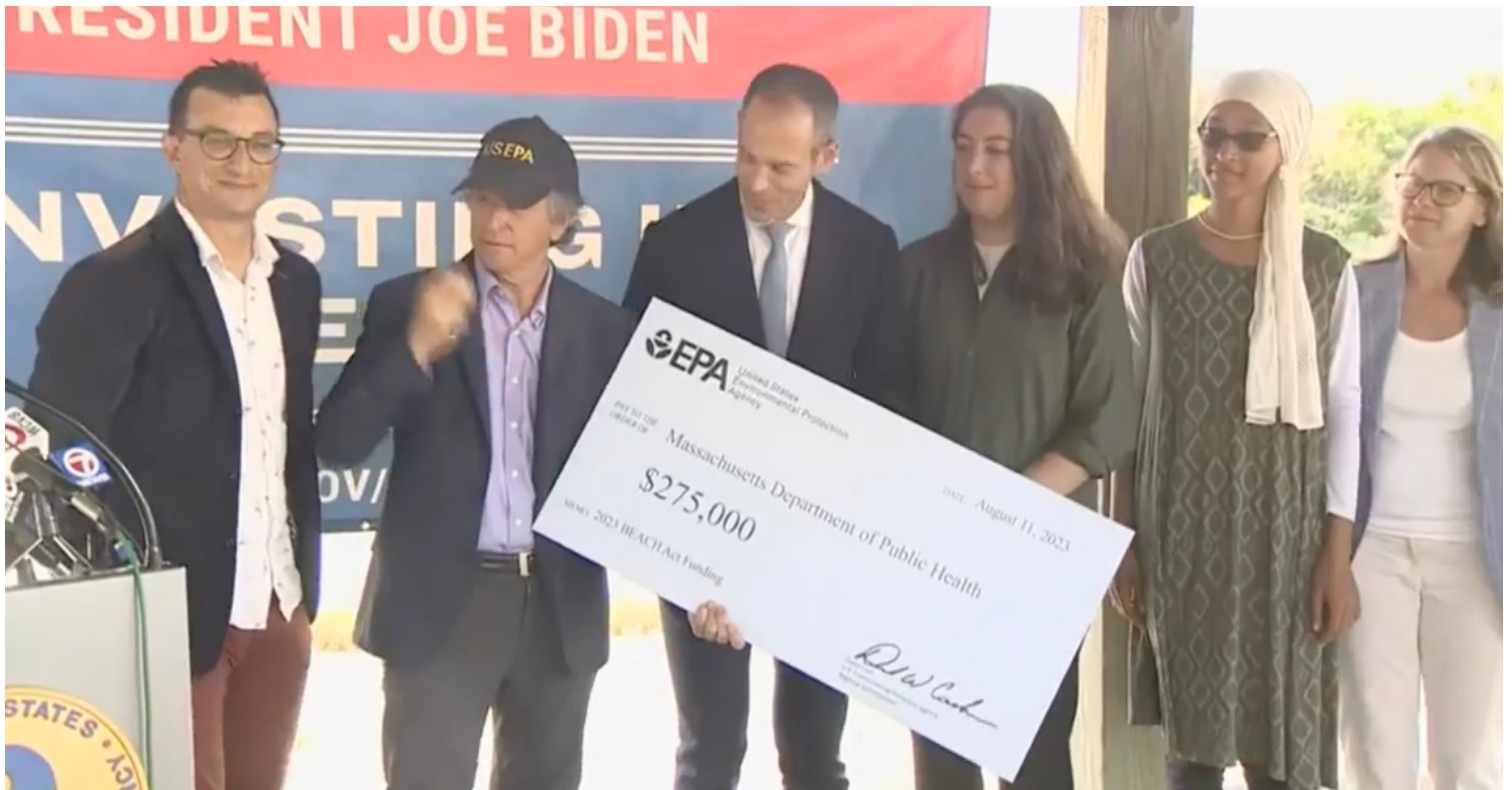


State Department of Public Health gets \$250,000 to improve beach water quality monitoring

Channel 7 Staff | August 11, 2023



Screen Captor from Channel 7 news.

DORCHESTER, MASS. (WHDH) - Funding to help better monitor water quality in Massachusetts has been awarded by the federal government, as the region continues to deal with beach closures due to elevated bacteria levels.

Grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) totaling \$250,000 were recently awarded to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to help with monitoring and testing efforts.

Officials from both agencies marked the new funding with an event at Tenean Beach in Dorchester Friday morning – one of multiple beachfronts where swimming is off limits due to “bacterial exceedance,” according to the DPH.

“We are monitoring all of them and every beach closure, we take seriously, and we want to make sure that we are doing what we can to re-test and get those beaches open as quickly as possible,” said Mass Department of Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein.

According to the DPH, of the state’s 1,100 beaches, at least 54 public beaches are currently considered to be unsafe due to bacteria, algae, and various other factors, limiting access during some of the warmest points of the year.

Factors cited by officials include the climate crisis as well as the waves of rain that have hit the state over the past few weeks,

intensifying an increase in beach closures.

“We’re investing in a wide range of different technologies to both monitor clean water in a way that ultimately can make sure that these beaches are better and better over time,” EPA Regional Administrator David Cash said at Friday’s event.

“Everyone here is prioritizing, that’s what we all want to work on – finding those ways to improve water quality at that more granular level,” said Chris Mancini of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay.

Officials highlighted how an [interactive beach status dashboard on the DPH’s website](#) is updated twice a day, and that with additional funding from the EPA, authorities can increase their capacity for both testing and monitoring.

Earlier in the summer, multiple beaches usually loaded with locals and tourists [were closed due to high bacteria levels](#), including a number of Plum Island beaches in Newburyport and Nahant Beach.

The funding award to the DPH is also expected to help public notification programs, as well.