

# The Daily Item

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BY ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN | December 3, 2021

## LEGISLATURE PUMPS \$5M INTO KING'S BEACH CLEANUP



**Ducks and seagulls take flight as a couple walks along King's Beach in Swampscott. (Spenser Hasak)**

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Legislature passed a \$4 billion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) relief package on Friday, which includes more than \$5 million to improve water quality at King's Beach in Lynn and Swampscott.

The relief package invests a total of \$8.17 million into resources in Lynn, Marblehead, Revere, Saugus and Swampscott in areas including economic recovery, workforce development, healthcare and education.

For the past 10 years, King's Beach has been ranked one of the worst beaches for water quality in the state, according to the Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's annual Metropolitan Beaches Water Quality Report Card.

State Sen. Brendan P. Crighton (D-Lynn), Rep. Lori A. Ehrlich (D-Marblehead), Rep. Daniel F. Cahill (D-Lynn), and Rep. Peter Capano (D-Lynn) worked together to secure the funding and the language that goes along with the funding for King's Beach.

Crighton said residents of the North Shore deserve a cleaner beach, so he is looking forward to collaborating with the state and local officials to find a permanent solution.

"The high levels of bacteria at King's Beach are both a public-health and environmental-justice issue," Crighton said. "The bacteria can contribute to respiratory disease, ear and eye infections, nausea, vomiting and other serious conditions."

As the only beach in a city of more than 100,000 residents, King's Beach was found to be unsafe for swimming more than one out of every five days in 2020.

Mayor Thomas M. McGee said it's great to see the state delegation fighting for ARPA funding to solve the water-quality issues at King's Beach.

"Over the years we have worked collaboratively with state and local officials along with environmental groups and residents to highlight the seriousness of the problem," McGee said. "This is a big step towards having a clean and safe beach for all residents to enjoy."

The delegation labeled this issue as a matter of environmental justice, as years with heavy rainfall make bacteria levels dangerously high, resulting in a serious public-health issue.

Capano said a solution to the problem at King's Beach is long overdue, but feels they are finally on the cusp of rectifying this problem.

With this funding, Mayor-elect Jared Nicholson said they have a tremendous opportunity to address a longstanding inequity for the community.

"We look forward to tackling this issue as part of our incoming administration to pick up the ongoing efforts and work with this broad range of stakeholders required to fix this," Nicholson said.

Similar investments in coastal areas like Boston Harbor have proven to be successful, with fish, birds, wildlife, kayaking, boating, and swimming returning to Boston Harbor after decades of heavy pollution from sewage and wastewater discharge.

A significant investment and a commitment to cleaning worked in revitalizing Boston Harbor, and now it is time to do the same in Lynn.

Cahill said this substantial amount of initial funding is a first step to address the pollution of King's Beach.

For her constituents in Lynn and Swampscott, Ehrlich said King's Beach is where they go every summer with their families to cool off and make memories.

"They trust that the beach is safe for swimming and will not make them sick," Ehrlich said. "With this funding, our state makes a commitment to residents today and in the future that they will have a clean, safe place to swim and gather well into the future."

Swampscott Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald said these funds reflect a powerful commitment from the state to advance the work of addressing the most important environmental hazard in the region.

"We all dream of a day where King's Beach will return to the environmental jewel it once was, as one of New England's most unique and prominent resource areas," Fitzgerald said.

Bob Tucker, president of Friends of Lynn & Nahant Beach, commended the state delegation on their commitment to improving water quality to give residents clean water to enjoy.

"This funding will assist in remedying the constant contamination coming from the outfall," Tucker said.

Executive Director of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay Chris Mancini said this funding represents an enormous step forward for the cleanup of King's Beach.

"It will make it possible to begin the work that will eliminate filthy, bacteria-laden discharges from both Lynn and Swampscott at Stacey Brook that continue to threaten public health," Mancini said. "I want to thank and commend Sen. Crighton and the Metropolitan Beaches Commission, which he co-chairs with Rep. Adrian Madaro, for their work to prioritize this effort to benefit some of our state's most densely-populated, economically- and racially-diverse communities."

This ARPA relief package also includes \$1 million for the construction of a senior center in Lynn, and \$300,000 each for climate-resiliency initiatives in Lynn, to Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. for its elder mobile mental-health program, and to the Lynn Economic Development & Industrial Corporation to distribute grants to businesses that have been adversely impacted by the 2019 novel coronavirus pandemic.

The funding also gives the E-Team Machinist Training program in Lynn \$150,000; \$100,000 for energy-efficient lighting upgrades at Keane Park; \$100,000 for the installation of green-infrastructure elements on Boston Street to improve water quality, mitigate flooding, and reduce the heat island effect; \$100,000 for tourism and cultural enhancements at the Lynn Memorial Auditorium; \$100,000 to alleviate flooding from collapsed underground culverts along Strawberry Brook; and \$100,000 to the Lynn Water & Sewer Commission for combined-sewer overflow.

Local investments also include \$200,000 to the Town of Swampscott for the replacement of pump stations to address combined-sewer overflow; \$200,000 to the Town of Marblehead for a resiliency assessment of coastal infrastructure; \$100,000 for increased pedestrian lighting on public ways in Saugus; \$20,000 for a new commercial stove and oven for the American Legion Post 210 in Saugus; \$50,000 for the dredging of Sales and Greens Creek in Revere; and \$50,000 for repairs to the Town Line Brook Floodgate in the City of Revere and Town of Malden.

Having passed the House and Senate, the legislation now advances to Gov. Charlie Baker's desk for consideration.