

Implementing the **BEACH** Act of 2000

Report to Congress

October 2006





UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

NOV 16 2006

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to transmit the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Report to Congress on *Implementing the BEACH Act 2000*. Required by Section 7 of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000 (BEACH Act), this report provides: 1) recommendations on the need for additional water quality criteria for pathogens and pathogen indicators and other actions that should be taken to improve the quality of coastal recreation waters; 2) an evaluation of federal, state, and local efforts to implement the Act, including the amendments made by the Act; and 3) recommendations on improvements to methodologies and techniques for monitoring of coastal recreation waters.

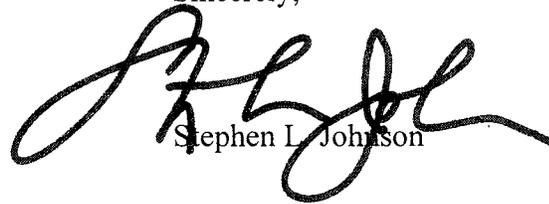
The Report to Congress also documents the significant progress that EPA and its partners have made in implementing the BEACH Act. EPA, in partnership with state and local governments, has made significant progress in improving public health at our Nation's beaches. This Report highlights these accomplishments.

1. States have significantly improved their assessment and monitoring of beaches: the number of monitored beaches has increased from about 1,000 in 1997 to more than 3,500 out of approximately 6,000 beaches as identified to EPA by the states for the 2004 swimming season,
2. EPA has strengthened water quality standards throughout all the coastal recreation waters in the United States; the number of coastal and Great Lakes states with up-to-date water quality criteria has increased from 11 in 2000 to 35 in 2004.
3. EPA has improved public access to data on beach advisories and closings by improving its electronic system for beach data collection and delivery systems; the system is known as "eBeaches." The public can view the beach information at http://oaspub.epa.gov/beacon/beacon_national_page.main
4. EPA is working to improve pollution control efforts that reduce potential adverse health effects at beaches. EPA's Strategic Plan and recent National Water Program Guidance describe these actions to coordinate assessment of problems affecting beaches and to reduce pollution.
5. EPA is conducting research to develop new or revised water quality criteria and more rapid methods for assessing water quality at beaches so that results can be made available in hours rather than days. Quicker tests will allow beach managers to make faster

decisions about the safety of beach waters and thus help reduce the risk of illness among beachgoers.

I would be pleased to further discuss the contents of this report at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Johnson', written over the printed name.

Stephen L. Johnson

Enclosure



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

NOV 16 2006

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Richard B. Cheney
President of the Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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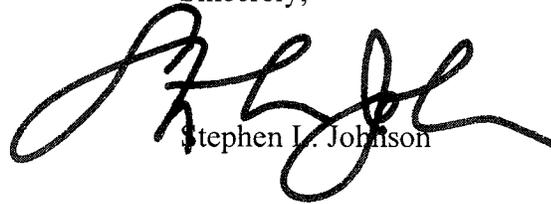
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