

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart
Miami District Office
12851 SW 42nd Street Suite 131
Miami, FL 33175

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart,

Our beaches are what make this (town/city) such a wonderful place to live. They offer us a place to play, relax and refresh our spirit. Our beaches, and those who chose to visit them each year, also support our local economy.

Since the passage of the BEACH Act in 2000, our state (local department of health) has been receiving grants from the federal government to fund its beach water quality monitoring program. When the water does not meet national water quality standards, advisories are issued warning the public that the water is not safe for swimming. Unfortunately, the beach grants authorized by the BEACH Act will not pay for any investigative work to determine where beach pollution is coming from so that we can fix our water quality problems. Confounding this, the amount of funding our state (county?) receives to monitor our beaches is inadequate. Generally only the most popular beaches or those with known water quality issues are tested frequently, leaving the water quality at many beaches unknown for most of the year.

The Beach Protection Act of 2007 has been submitted to Congress to fix many of the inadequacies of beach monitoring programs in coastal states across the nation. It proposes to double the funding sent to states for their beach programs and will allow source tracking and pollution prevention to be included in beach grants. It also proposes to modernize the technology we rely on to protect public health by requiring the Environmental Protection Agency to adopt rapid testing methods that will provide water quality data in less than two hours. Currently-used methods take at least 24 hours, which really only tells us today what the water quality was like yesterday. The proposed legislation would also require all states to maintain online public databases with water quality data available for each beach and to issue swimming advisories within 24 hours.

Please show your support for healthy beaches and thriving coastal communities by cosponsoring the Beach Protection Act of 2007. Contact Tim Del Monico with