

State Water Resources Control Board

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STATE WATER BOARD AWARDS OVER \$1.4 MILLION TO SAN DIEGO AREA TO CURB BEACH POLLUTION

Sacramento - The State Water Resources Control Board has approved two grants totaling nearly \$1.5 million that will go mainly to the city of San Diego to help keep urban runoff from polluting the waters along Mission Bay beaches during dry-weather months. The funds will be formally presented at a ceremony on June 23, at 10 a.m., at Sunset Point on Mission Bay.

Funding for the projects comes from the Clean Beaches Initiative, part of Proposition 13, the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act of 2000. Passed by voters, the \$1.97 billion bond program funds projects that protect the State's waterways, beaches, and drinking water. Some of the grant money also comes from The Watershed, Clean Beaches, and Water Quality Act of 2002, Proposition 40. (Proposition funds are not part of the State's General Fund.)

Clean Beaches projects are construction projects, which demonstrate sustained, long-term water quality protection benefits. These projects get to the causes of beach closures and use diversion, repairs and treatment to alleviate bacterial contamination and keep our beaches open.

"These grants will fund projects which reduce land-based sources of beach contamination. We're always pleased to work with local agencies to improve coastal water quality. It benefits everyone," said Art Baggett, chairman of the State Water Board.

One of the grants, for a lesser amount, has been earmarked for the South Coast Water District to help them repair facilities that divert urban runoff to the sanitary sewer system.

John H. Minan, Chairman of the San Diego Regional Water Board and Professor of Law at the University of San Diego, said, "Mission Bay, which is the West Coast's largest aquatic man-made park, is a critical recreational resource for our community. It has been under assault from urban runoff and other sources of pollution and has been a continuing source of concern to the Regional Board. This grant will assist the City of San Diego in protecting this important community asset."

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The Clean Beaches Initiative provided \$35 million for coastal cleanup projects throughout the state, to alleviate the health hazards and beach postings and closures caused by non-point source pollution. Proposition 40 also contributed funds for Clean Beach projects, bringing the total funding of non-point source pollution to \$76 million. Non-point source pollution is urban runoff contaminated by pesticides, fertilizers, animal wastes, oil, grease, sediments, and other toxics used in our everyday lives.

CLEAN BEACHES 3-3-3

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PROJECTS RECEIVING GRANTS

The City of San Diego. The City will receive a \$1,250,000 grant to reduce bacterial pollution in Mission Bay. The City will use the grant funds to install a centralized irrigation control system at several landscaped areas around the perimeter of Mission Bay. Installation of the computerized control system will eliminate the runoff of excess irrigation water to the Bay. Elimination of runoff from the landscaped areas should help reduce the incidence of bacterial warnings at beaches located in the Bay. The grant money was appropriated in the Budget Act of 2001 using funds from the Costa-Machado Water Act of 2000, Coastal Nonpoint Source Control Program (Proposition 13).

The South Coast Water District. The District will receive a \$221,500 grant for projects that will rehabilitate two of the District's sewage lift stations. The lift stations carry urban runoff from local storm drain diversions. The lift stations are past their useful life and rehabilitation will ensure reliable operation and prevent possible sewer overflows that might adversely affect coastal waters adjacent to the lift stations. The project is located in Orange County and scheduled for completion in January 2005. The Watershed, Clean Beaches, and Water Quality Act provided the funds from Proposition 40 for this grant.

Here are a few additional facts:

- San Diego and Orange Counties are popular beach destinations. Beachgoers have contributed more than \$60 billion to California's economy in a single year.
- These Counties experience a significant number of beach closures due to high concentrations of indicator bacteria.
- Urban runoff contains bacteria-laden animal waste, lawn & garden fertilizers, gas & oil from cars, and plastic trash.
- Health hazards from bacteria contamination can affect swimmers, surfers, and beach goers.
- When a beach is closed due to contamination, the economic effect can be devastating to local business owners.
- Diverting urban runoff to a wastewater treatment plant will help prevent this contamination from occurring.

Clean Beaches Initiative Grant Program

The State Water Resources Control Board has been tasked with the distribution of funds for the Clean Beaches Initiative Grant Program. The Budget Act of 2001 allocated \$32.3 million of Proposition 13 funds to implement projects to prevent bacterial contamination from causing the closure of California beaches. To further the effort, \$46 million from Proposition 40, the Watershed, Clean Beaches, and Water Quality Act of 2002 was appropriated to help organizations – local, public, and non-profit – implement projects that assist in coastal water quality protection.

Clean Beaches funding was used for the following types of projects:

- Diverting or treating urban runoff (the most common use of CBI grant funds.)
- Implementing Best Management Practices to reduce or eliminate sources.
- Implementing circulation improvements.
- Conducting studies to determine source(s) and evaluate alternative corrective actions followed by implementation of corrective actions.

For additional information on the CBI Grant Program, please visit the State Water Resources Control Board's website at

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/cwphome/beaches/index.html>.

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