

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James P. Moran
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson,

We write today regarding Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act grants administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, which were eliminated in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget proposal.

The BEACH Act of 2000 helped states improve water quality testing and monitoring at beaches across the country, which has been critical to protecting the health of beachgoers. American families and international tourists make over two billion trips each year to America's beaches to fish, sunbathe, boat, swim, surf, and bird-watch. According to the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, tourism at America's beaches contributes more than \$320 billion a year to America's economy. BEACH Act grants ensure that states have the resources necessary to assure beachgoers that the water they are swimming in is not going to put their health at risk.

We fear that without this federal investment in water quality monitoring, states will choose not to set aside resources for this important program. In 2010, fewer than half of the states receiving federal grants invested their own funds on top of the federal grants for water quality monitoring and notification. States that receive these grants are currently obligated to have monitoring and notification programs that meet a certain threshold, but without BEACH Act grants that requirement will disappear.

We respectfully request that the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies restore funding for this important program back to the FY2012 level of \$9.9 million. This very modest investment will ensure water quality monitoring and notification programs stay in place to give Americans the peace of mind that the water they swim in is safe and will not make them sick. We thank you for your consideration of this important request.

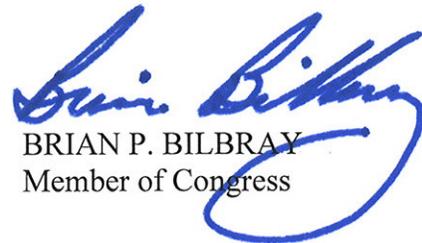
Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress


FRANK A. LOBIONDO
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



BRIAN P. BILBRAY
Member of Congress



KATHY CASTOR
Member of Congress



TIMOTHY H. BISHOP
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress