



NEWS



For immediate release:
September 5, 2008

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County Officials Applaud EPA's Decision to Study Human Health Risks at Local Beaches

LOS ANGELES—At the urging of County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Flood Control District officials, among others, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has agreed to conduct a study of public health risks stemming from bacteria and viruses found commonly on local beaches and further assess pathogens attributable to birds and other wildlife. This agreement comes as the result of a settlement of a lawsuit brought to the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the County of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies.

“I commend the U.S. EPA on its decision to have this information made available to the Flood Control District and its water quality partners,” said Diego Cadena, Deputy Director of the [County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works](#). “The County and Flood Control District work closely with local regulators, cities, and environmental groups to protect the health of swimmers, surfers, and other beach-goers. Our stormwater program is based on sound science provided by the EPA and other experts, so this study will be invaluable to us.”

“We welcome this effort to better understand the sources of contamination that could provide important information on how to reduce it,” said Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, County of Los Angeles Director of [Public Health](#) and Health Officer.

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County Officials Applaud EPA's Decision to
Study the Human Health Risk of Local Beaches
2-2-2

In the settlement, signed today by Federal District Court Judge Philip S. Gutierrez, the U.S. EPA agreed to study water quality impacts on human health at a beach that is subject to urban runoff, as are many of the beaches along the Los Angeles County coastline. The EPA further agreed to make its findings available to the public no later than December 2010 and publish new water quality criteria based on the study by October 2012.

In October 2000, in the [Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Plan Act](#) (the Beach Act), Congress directed the U.S. EPA to conduct studies of the health impacts of bacteria and viruses in coastal waters used for recreation. U.S. EPA was required to make the results of those studies available to the public by October, 2003, and to adopt new water quality standards for beaches based on those studies by October 2005. As major stakeholders in the arena of water quality, the County of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Flood Control District joined Natural Resources Defense Council, demanding that the U.S. EPA follow-through on its obligation under this Act.

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ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District encompasses more than 3,000 sq. miles, 85 cities, and close to 2.1 million parcels of land. Flood Control District infrastructure includes 14 major dams, 487 miles of open channel, 2,834 miles of underground storm drain, and more than 80,000 catch basins. The Flood Control District's stormwater program is developed under the oversight of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the state agency that is responsible for overseeing these programs, and is undertaken in partnership with the cities at the beaches and in the watersheds. The District's stormwater program includes multifaceted public education efforts, such as stenciling storm drains and airing public service announcements, as well as extensive structural improvements, such as devices to exclude trash from entering into the streams and waterbodies and low-flow stormwater diversion devices at the beaches. Visit lawatersheds.org for more information.