



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

APR 19 2004

OFFICE OF  
WATER

Mr. James L. Connaughton  
Chairman, Council on  
Environmental Quality  
730 Jackson Place NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dr. John D. Graham  
Administrator, Office of Information  
And Regulatory Affairs  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
725 Seventeenth Street NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Connaughton and Dr. Graham:

Thank you for your April 19, 2004, letter reiterating this Administration's priority of ensuring clean beaches and oceans, including the successful implementation by States and EPA of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000.

Over the last several years, EPA has worked with States and Territories to adopt up-to-date water quality standards to help protect recreational users of coastal beaches. We have provided more than \$20 million in grants to States and Territories for developing and implementing improved standards, coastal water quality monitoring, and public notification programs. In 2002, we issued detailed guidance to States and Territories for monitoring and assessing coastal recreation waters and for notifying America's beach-going public when those waters exceed water quality standards.

As your letter affirms, EPA firmly believes that American families deserve safe beaches. We and the States and Territories must all work together to accelerate progress towards adoption of protective standards.

I am pleased to enclose our action plan to accelerate progress and to meet the requirements of the BEACH Act. Today, I signed letters to key State and Territory leaders reiterating the BEACH Act requirements and describing the steps EPA will take to make sure protective standards are in place. Shortly, EPA will announce an additional \$10 million in grants to States and Territories for FY 2004 to further their monitoring and public notification programs for coastal beaches. The Administrator of EPA will also promptly sign a notice of proposed rulemaking establishing more protective standards as required by the BEACH Act for those

States and Territories that have not yet met the statutory requirement to do so. The enclosed action plan also describes numerous other actions we are taking to help States and Territories protect families at coastal beaches.

We share a common desire to ensure clean and safe water at America's beaches, to collaborate with States and Territories, and, where necessary, to issue protective Federal water quality standards to advance the goals of the BEACH Act and the Clean Water Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben H. Grumbles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Benjamin H. Grumbles  
Acting Assistant Administrator

Enclosure