



# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

## JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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Office of Communications • Mark Dallas Loeffler, Director  
1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • Fax: 512-475-1415

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Jim Suydam**  
**(512) 463-5339**  
**(512) 417-5382 cell**

### **Beach Watch media blitz hits the airwaves**

*Land Office program lets beach-goers know water quality levels at all of Texas' top beaches*

**AUSTIN** — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today unveiled Texas Beach Watch, a public notification initiative that reports water conditions along the coast.

“When Texans head for the beaches this summer, we want them to think about water quality,” Patterson said. “At TexasBeachWatch.com, you’re just a few clicks from a great time at the beach.”

TexasBeachWatch.com is user-friendly, allowing beach-goers to simply click on a map of the Texas coast for a pop-up with important, yet easy to read water quality data. The site will take the mystery out of what’s in the water and help coastal communities identify areas needing focused improvement.

To help spread the word, a humorous TV and radio spot starring Patterson will run statewide in both English and Spanish, with the goal of driving traffic to TexasBeachWatch.com. There, Texans can find real-time water quality information at any of 167 monitoring sites.

Texas Beach Watch monitors water quality at all of Texas’ top recreational beaches by testing for the presence of the Enterococcus bacteria, which is found in the intestinal tracts of animals and humans and indicates fecal contamination, usually by storm water runoff.

When bacteria levels in the water exceed the acceptable standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Land Office works with local officials to issue advisories warning the public not to swim in affected waters.

Texas Beach Watch collects water samples along the Texas coast in Aransas, Brazoria, Cameron, Galveston, Jefferson, Kleberg, Matagorda, Nueces and San Patricio counties.

Under the Texas Beach Watch program, the Land Office manages a network of universities, local governments and laboratories to collect water samples and test for harmful bacteria. Samples are collected weekly during the peak beach season from May through September and every other week from October through April with the exception of March, when weekly samples are collected to coincide with Spring Break crowds.

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Water samples are tested for bacteria and then categorized into one of the different color coded levels based on the results: Green indicates low count levels (less than 35 cfu/100 ml) and is fine for all recreational activities; yellow is moderate (between 35 and 104 cfu/100 ml.) and indicates that beach-goers should consider monitoring the Web site for news alerts; and red indicates high levels (greater than 104 cfu/100 ml), at which point an advisory is posted.

“Short of taking along a microbiologist, TexasBeachWatch.com is the best way to know that the water’s fine,” Patterson said.

For additional information on *Texas Beach Watch*, call 1-800-998-4GLO, or visit the *Texas Beach Watch* Web site at [www.TexasBeachWatch.com](http://www.TexasBeachWatch.com).

### **Additional Information Available**

The Texas General Land Office has made available education materials in English, Spanish and Vietnamese that include a press kit containing a program fact sheet, and FAQs on water sampling and levels. Additionally, the GLO is launching a PSA campaign for radio and TV. These PSAs will air between April and September and can be heard and viewed in both English and Spanish on participating stations. A CD of the advertisements also is available to the media.

NOTE: Attached are the new water level warning signs, a link to the Web site, and PSA

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