

# NEWS

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*FROM ZEV YAROSLAVSKY*

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## YAROSLAVSKY ANNOUNCES WATER QUALITY INVESTIGATION OF TWO MALIBU BEACH LOCATIONS

The Board of Supervisors today approved a \$1 million study by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project to investigate high bacteria levels at Paradise Cove and Escondido Beach.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky, representing the Third District that includes the affected area, had requested the investigation, supported by a Task Force comprising the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, Heal the Bay, the City of Malibu, and the County of Los Angeles departments of Public Works and Public Health.

"It's my expectation that this study will answer some questions that this community has been asking for years: 'Where is this stuff coming from? And what can we do about it?'" Yaroslavsky said after the vote. "Once we know that, we can work together on developing strategies to help stop it at its sources."

High bacteria levels can stem from any combination of sources, including pets, horses, septic systems, wildlife, and shorebirds. While the actual impact of these elevated levels is hard to determine, some individuals experience illness when they come in contact with contaminated water, say County Public Health officials.

"Our first priority is to protect the health and safety of LA County residents and visitors to our area beaches," said Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding, Director of Public Health.

“This study will help shed light on possible sources of contamination so we can work with our partners to develop solutions to this ongoing situation. We will continue to monitor the ocean water to ensure safe swim and surf areas.”

Yaroslavsky said that researchers will initially collect water samples from 27 predetermined locations within the watershed. Water samples will be sent to a Heal the Bay laboratory to assess bacteria levels and determine whether bacteria identified through the study are from anthropogenic (human-related) sources. The presence of domestic by-products like optical brighteners (added to almost all laundry soaps and detergents) and caffeine would be consistent with a human impact on water quality.

Approximately half the water sampling locations are on land that is open to the public. The rest of the samples will be taken from privately-owned properties with creeks that flow downstream into the two beach locations. In each of these cases, the County has been granted access to the properties for water sample collection.

The first phase of the study consists of water sample collection throughout the watershed for a total of 15 weeks during the spring and fall. Later on, bacteria “hot spots” (locations with high bacteria readings) will be subject to additional upstream and downstream testing in an attempt to track down the source. Officials expect to conclude the study in the fall of 2008.

Further details can be found at the website <http://www.NSMBwaterquality.org>; additional information may be downloaded at <http://lacounty.info/bos/sop/supdocs/31112.pdf>.

(MORE)

**EDITORS BACKGROUND:**

**ABOUT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTAL WATER RESEARCH PROJECT (SCCWRP)**

The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Authority (SCCWRP) is a joint powers agency focusing on marine environmental research. Its mission is to contribute to the scientific understanding of linkages among human activities, natural events, and the health of the Southern California coastal environment, communicate this understanding to decision makers and other stakeholders, and recommend strategies for protecting the ocean environment for this and future generations. More information is available at [www.sccwrp.org](http://www.sccwrp.org).

**ABOUT HEAL THE BAY**

Heal the Bay, celebrating its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, is dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy again for people and marine life. It is one of the largest nonprofit environmental organizations in Los Angeles County, with more than 10,000 members. The organization focuses on education, outreach, research and advocacy through programs like Coastal Cleanup Day each September, the weekly Beach Report Card and annual updates. More information is available at [www.healthebay.org](http://www.healthebay.org).

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