# U.S. Beach Program Overview

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September 17, 2009

# Presentation Overview

- The Problem
- The Beach Program
- The BEACH Act of 2000
    - Water Quality Standards
    - Grants
    - Monitoring and notification
    - Research
- Progress and Next Steps

# The Problem

- History of inconsistent recreational water monitoring and notification
- Inconsistent water quality standards
- Illness due to exposure to pathogens while swimming

# The BEACH Act

- The BEACH Act was signed into law October 2000

- **Program goal:** Reduce public health risk of infection to users of our nation's recreational waters

- The Act amended the Clean Water Act:
  - §303(i) – Water Quality Standards
  - §406 – Grants
  - §104(v) – Studies
  - §304(a)(9) – New criteria

# Water Quality Standards

- Water Quality Standards
  - Designated uses
  - Water quality criteria
  - Antidegradation policy

# BEACH Act Grants

- Approximately $10 million awarded each year since 2001
  - 35 states and territories
  - 2 tribes
- Distributed by allocation formula
  - Beach season + shoreline miles + coastal population
- New formula for amounts over $10 million and reallocated funds
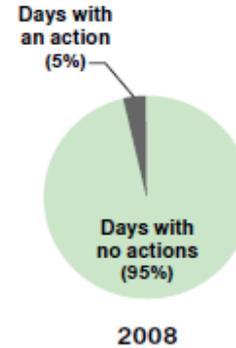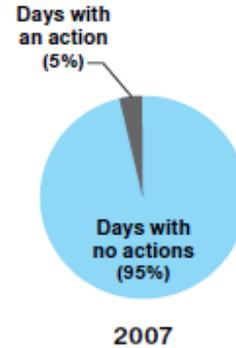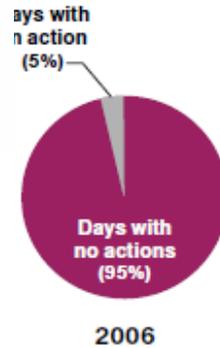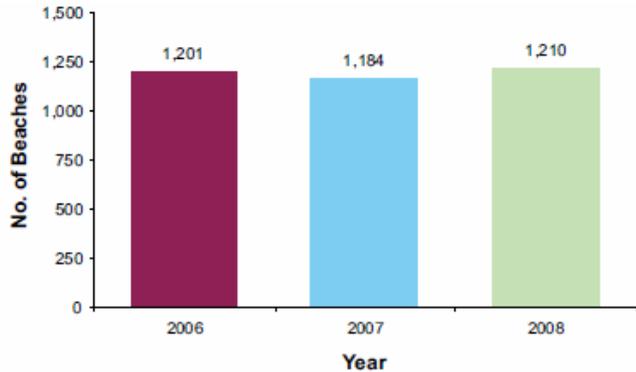  - Beach miles + beach use

# Beach Monitoring and Notification

- Monitoring for indicators of fecal contamination (enterococci and *E. coli*)
    - States have "tiered" beach monitoring based on use and risk
- Beach closure or advisory to warn beachgoers of potential risk when criteria are exceeded
- Notification to EPA and other relevant agencies

# Annual Beach Report

# Research

- Epidemiological studies (NEEAR)
- Rapid methods
- Predictive modeling

# Progress Since 2000

- All coastal and Great Lakes states and territories have beach monitoring and notification programs

- Public awareness of beach water quality has increased

- Network for sharing information

- Supporting science is improving

# More Can Be Done

- Rapid test methods
- Faster notification and posting advisories
- Compliance review
- Source tracking
- Prevention