



*Protecting and Restoring the Santa Barbara Channel and Its Watersheds*

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May 7th, 2009

Supervisor Salud Carbajal  
First District Supervisor  
105 E. Anapamu St.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**Re: Santa Barbara County Budget for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 – Beach Monitoring**

Dear Supervisor Carbajal,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, to encourage you to make the Public Health Department's beach monitoring program a priority in the upcoming County budget for fiscal year 2009-2010. As I am sure that you are aware, last winter, the County cut beach monitoring from its 2008-2009 budget. With the support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and other local sponsors, Channelkeeper was able to fill this critical monitoring gap throughout the winter at 12 local beaches including First District beaches such as Rincon Beach, Carpinteria City Beach, Carpinteria State Beach, Summerland Beach, and Butterfly Beach. Channelkeeper has been told that the County will resume beach monitoring in mid-May and continue monitoring through July. As far as we are aware, the County has not yet secured outside funding to extend the beach monitoring program past July.

Channelkeeper recognizes the importance of ongoing beach monitoring to the local community. Since swimming and surfing in bacteria-laden water can make you sick, we feel it is vital that ocean users remain informed when State bacteriological standards are exceeded to avoid putting themselves at risk. **Our local economy depends upon clean beaches and unpolluted waters for tourism as well as recreation for local residents.** Further, this information is an important resource for municipalities, agencies and others working to improve water quality at Santa Barbara County beaches. Year-round monitoring, informs important decisions about where and how best to allocate limited resources for the protection and restoration of local waterbodies. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is in the initial stages of formulating a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for bacteria at Santa Barbara County beaches, and the County's weekly beach monitoring is the primary data source for that effort.

Although Channelkeeper was able to fill this gap throughout the winter, ultimately, it is the County's responsibility to protect public health by monitoring local beaches. The State of California recognized this fact when it passed Assembly Bill 411, which requires local health departments to regularly monitor beaches and post health warnings whenever State health standards are exceeded. Santa Barbara Channelkeeper respectfully encourages you to make the Public Health Department's beach monitoring program a priority in the upcoming County budget for fiscal year 2009-2010.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Ben Pitterle  
Acting Policy Director  
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper