

State Water Resources Control Board**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****November 15, 2001**

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**State Water Board OKs \$750,000 Clean Beaches Initiative
Grant To Reduce Bacteria at Imperial Beach**

SACRAMENTO – The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) today approved a \$750,000 Clean Beaches Initiative grant for the City of Imperial Beach. The money will fund a project that will use radar to track coastal currents and help city officials identify and implement the best pollution control activities as well as provide information on reducing contamination sources outside the city's control.

Imperial Beach, located in Southern San Diego County had 2.3 million visitors last year. During that time, there were 39 beach closures due to the presence of bacteria. There are numerous bacteria sources for Imperial Beach: the South Bay Ocean Outfall, the Tijuana River, northward flow of contaminated Mexican waters, and local beach runoff. The multiplicity of possible sources within proximity to the beach has made source identification difficult.

Difficulty in identifying sources has caused delays in efforts to improve and stop pollution levels. The use of high frequency radar to map real-time coastal currents will assist city officials. The beach presents a special case, as a substantial portion of the pollution comes from south of the U.S./Mexico border and cannot be controlled by the city. The project will provide information for reducing exposure to contamination from sources that cannot be controlled.

“The use of Clean Beaches Initiative funding allows local officials to develop innovative methods of tracking and controlling pollution,” said Arthur G. Baggett, Chairman of the SWRCB “We are pleased we can be instrumental in providing these grant monies to help protect California's precious water resources.”

The long-term benefits of the monitoring system will be two-fold: the real-time information will allow the early warning of potential offshore contamination; additionally, the information will assist in our understanding how this coastal region responds to different environmental factors such as tides, currents winds and precipitation.

In July 2001, Governor Gray Davis signed the 2001 Budget Act, which appropriated more than \$32 million for clean beaches projects. The Budget Act's Coastal Nonpoint Source Control subaccount provides funding for projects that protect and restore the state's coastal waters. The account uses funds from the Costa-Machado Act of 2000.

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The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov>