



Department of Health

Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

TTY: 711
www.health.ri.gov

February 27, 2024

Re: City of Newport Rejects Beach Outfall Project - RIDEM 2024 Bay and Watershed Restoration Funding Application

Dear Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management,

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Health in strong support of the City of Newport's proposal titled *Rejects Beach Outfall Project* to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Bay and Watershed Restoration Grant (BWRG).

The Rhode Island Department of Health's (RIDOH) mission is to prevent disease and protect and promote the health and safety of the people of Rhode Island. RIDOH's Beach Monitoring Program strives to protect the public from illnesses associated with swimming in contaminated bathing waters. With guidance and opportunity from the EPA, RIDOH works diligently with the City of Newport to collect and analyze water samples from bathing beaches during the summer months; help beach owners manage, find, and eliminate sources of contamination; and track and investigate illness reports.

The City of Newport's request for funding through the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management BWRG grant would allow the City of Newport to properly address the challenges they face regarding stormwater and runoff at Reject's Beach and Spouting Rock Beach Association. These are two well-known and heavily used beach facilities. RIDOH and volunteers through non-profit agencies have monitored these beaches annually. Due to the nature of these beaches, data have shown bacterial levels rise above EPA regulation during extreme weather and heavy rain events, resulting in beach closures or re-sampling. The implementation of a combined bioretention and a subsurface bioretention trench in the upper watershed will work to redirect flow and allow for green stormwater treatment to assist in lowering bacteria levels at these beaches during heavy rain events.

The Rhode Island Department of Health fully supports the City of Newport's grant application and believes it would be worth the investment for the water quality as well as the health and safety of residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "U Bandy".

Utpala Bandy, MD, MPH
Interim Director
Rhode Island Department of Health



State of Rhode Island