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PRESS RELEASE

Massachusetts Announces 2018 COASTSWEEP Beach Cleanup

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management

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Feedback

BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced that COASTSWEEP, Massachusetts' statewide beach cleanup, has officially begun and encourages volunteers to join dozens of cleanups along the coast this fall. Organized by the Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), COASTSWEEP cleanups will be held throughout September and into early November. Since 1987, thousands of COASTSWEEP volunteers have removed hundreds of tons of marine debris and other trash from Massachusetts beaches, lakes, rivers and seafloor.

“Marine debris presents a serious threat to Massachusetts' wildlife, water quality and beaches that so many people enjoy every summer,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton.** “To help keep our coast safe and beautiful for years to come, we encourage Commonwealth residents to join a COASTSWEEP cleanup this fall to pick up trash and take down data to help identify the sources of marine debris and find future solutions.”

COASTSWEEP is part of the International Coastal Cleanup, organized by Ocean Conservancy, which draws hundreds of thousands of volunteers to coastal cleanups in more than 90 countries worldwide. In addition to the important task of removing trash, COASTSWEEP volunteers record data about what they find. This information is entered into Ocean Conservancy's international marine debris database, where it helps researchers and policymakers better understand the sources of global marine debris and develop solutions for prevention.

“Thank you to the thousands of volunteers that have participated in COASTSWEEP since 1987, making our coasts cleaner and safer,” **said CZM Director Bruce Carlisle.** “Our data shows that much of the trash found on beaches starts as litter on our streets, which means the best way to prevent marine debris is to always properly dispose of your trash.”

From plastics as tiny as a grain of sand to items as large as abandoned cars, marine debris is more than just an eyesore. Sea birds, seals and other animals can be choked, starved or poisoned when they become entangled or mistake debris for food. Sea turtles are particularly vulnerable and can die after swallowing clear plastic bags, which look like their favorite food, jellyfish. Beachgoers can injure themselves on glass, wood or metal while

walking on the sand or swimming off the coast, and boaters can find themselves stranded when propellers are jammed with fishing line, or cooling intakes are clogged with plastic.

During COASTSWEEP 2017, nearly 2,400 volunteers removed more than 12 tons of trash from 116 sites in Massachusetts. As with past years, cigarette butts were the most common item collected (30,347 total), followed by plastic pieces (11,968). Many other plastic items were removed and catalogued—including bags, bottles and caps, straws, utensils, food containers and coffee lids—for a grand total of 67,343 plastic items tallied on Bay State beaches.

A great way to get involved in COASTSWEEP is to organize a cleanup. All cleanup supplies (bags, gloves, data cards, pencils, etc.) are provided free of charge and cleanups can be scheduled at your convenience. You can also volunteer at a scheduled cleanup. To join a cleanup or organize your own, check out the COASTSWEEP [website\(/coastswEEP\)](#) or call (617) 626-1200.

The Massachusetts Office Coastal Zone Management is the lead policy and planning agency on coastal and ocean issues within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Through planning, technical and grant assistance and public information programs, CZM seeks to balance the impacts of human activity with the protection of coastal and marine resources. The agency's work includes helping coastal communities address the challenges of storms, sea level rise and other effects of climate change; working with state, regional and federal partners to balance current and new uses of ocean waters while protecting ocean habitats and promoting sustainable economic development; and partnering with communities and other organizations to protect and restore coastal water quality and habitats.

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EEA seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. Through the stewardship of open space, protection of environmental resources, and enhancement of clean energy, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs works tirelessly to make Massachusetts a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

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Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (</orgs/massachusetts-office-of-coastal-zone-management>)

CZM is the lead policy, planning, and technical assistance agency on coastal and ocean issues within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and implements the state's coastal program under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

More (</orgs/massachusetts-office-of-coastal-zone-management>)

