

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2011

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DEP, CLEAN COMMUNITIES COUNCIL FORM PARTNERSHIP KEEPING BEACH CLEANUP EFFORTS STRONG IN NEW JERSEY

(11/P37) TRENTON - The Department of Environmental Protection, in partnership with the New Jersey Clean Communities Council, is seeking organizations and individuals to help keep New Jersey's beaches clean through the Adopt a Beach Program.

For the first time, the New Jersey Clean Communities Council, a nonprofit corporation, will be spearheading and managing the beach and waterway cleanup efforts with support from the DEP.

"This effort is a perfect example of a partnership helping the Department to maximize its resources during these difficult economic times to achieve a shared goal, at the same time even making an important program better," said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin.

"The Clean Communities Council already assists hundreds of New Jersey's municipalities with cleanup programs and education efforts. It makes perfect sense to extend that spirit of cooperation and utilize their expertise to keep the beaches along our coastline, our bays, our rivers and our streams free of trash," added Commissioner Martin.

The 2011 Adopt a Beach Program was launched today during the 3rd Annual Clean Communities Environmental Student Exchange held at the Wildwoods Convention Center in Wildwood. The event was sponsored by PSE&G and hosted by the New Jersey Clean Communities Council.

For the Clean Communities Council, Adopt a Beach will be a comprehensive statewide program to clean and maintain beaches, bays, rivers and all waterways through a network of municipalities, counties, community organizations, businesses and individuals working together to remove litter.

"We are excited about the opportunity to partner with DEP to promote clean beaches," said Clean Communities Council Executive Director Sandy Huber. "Adopt a Beach is another way to reach New Jersey residents and visitors about the need to keep the state clean."

Not only is litter unsightly, it can have adverse impacts on wildlife. Much of the trash that gets onto New Jersey's beaches is litter that is dropped onto streets and then carried by stormwater runoff through drains that discharge into waterways. The DEP and Clean Communities Council urge all residents and visitors to protect and respect New Jersey's beaches and waterways by not littering.

For years the DEP has coordinated two statewide cleanup efforts each year, one in the spring and another in the fall. Many thousands of volunteers participated in

those efforts. Last year, however, the fall cleanup was cancelled because the DEP did not have the resources to organize it.

The Clean Communities Council stepped in to take over the Adopt a Beach program. The Council plans to continue the tradition of statewide seasonal cleanups through its network of municipalities and counties. The Council also encourages businesses, community organizations and individuals to adopt portions of beaches and regularly keep them clean over a period of at least one year.

"The Christie administration is committed to protecting the ocean and our beaches," Commissioner Martin said. "Clean beaches and clean water are vital to the health and economy of our state."

"We are extremely grateful that the New Jersey Clean Communities Council has stepped forward to make sure this important program continues to keep our beaches clean," added Commissioner Martin. "Equally important, they are keeping alive the spirit of volunteerism that has been a hallmark of the Adopt a Beach program for nearly two decades."

For more information or to volunteer, visit: www.njclean.org or call the Clean Communities Council at 609-989-5900. You may also e-mail the council at njccc@njclean.org.