



News Release

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
New England Regional Office
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Boston Harbor Takes Major Step to Limit Boat Pollution with “No Discharge” Designation

Largest Urban Port in U.S. to Ban Boat Sewage

(Boston, Mass. – July 7, 2008) – With state and local backing, EPA is designating Boston Harbor as a “No Discharge” area. This status means that discharges of treated and untreated boat sewage are prohibited within these Massachusetts state waters, including the Towns and Cities of Boston, Braintree, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Hingham, Hull, Milton, Newton, Quincy, Watertown, Weymouth, and Winthrop.

In May, the Mass. Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), in partnership with the City of Quincy and the Urban Harbor Institute, petitioned EPA to approve the No Discharge designation. Following consideration of the request, and a 30-day public review and comment period, EPA will approve the request to protect these coastal waters from boat sewage.

“Designating a major urban shipping waterway like Boston Harbor as a no discharge area is an important milestone in EPA’s effort to protect the entire New England coastline from boat sewage,” said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA’s New England Office. “Once again, we are seeing forward-looking New Englanders showing the way to the rest of the country about how we can better protect our environment.”

City of Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino said, “Designation of Boston Harbor as a No-Discharge Area puts an exclamation point on the work that’s already been done to bring this jewel of our city back. This summer more than ever, Boston’s beaches and islands will be a destination for residents trying to beat the heat and show the kids a fun time without having to fill the tank. The City of Boston has committed to providing more pumpout facilities including a new pumpout boat to ensure that, from the beaches of South Boston to Spectacle Island, Boston Harbor is an even cleaner and more vibrant place for our residents, families and visitors to enjoy.”

“As a Charlestown resident and a recreational boater, I know what an asset a clean Boston Harbor is, and this designation will help keep these waters clean,” said Ian Bowles, Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, which includes the Office of Coastal Zone Management. “One-third of the Massachusetts coast is now designated as NDA, and we are well on our way to Governor Patrick’s goal of all of the Commonwealth’s coastal waters becoming discharge-free.”

To qualify for a No Discharge designation, the applicant must show there are enough “pumpout” facilities where boaters can get their sewage holding tanks pumped out. This particular area has an estimated 8,720 boats, of which only 4,047 are large enough to have a head or toilet on board. There are a total of 35 pumpout facilities in the designated area available to the boating community. In addition, there are four pending pumpout facilities which should be operational this boating season.

Boat sewage can lead to health problems for swimmers, closed shellfish beds and the overall degradation of marine habitats.

The Urban Harbors Institute, the City of Boston, and the City of Quincy initiated the No Discharge Area designation process in the summer of 2007 to safeguard local marine resources.

Many other areas in New England already have designated their coastal waters as No Discharge areas, or are in the process of doing so. These include:

- All state marine waters of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire;
- In Massachusetts: Harwich, Waquoit Bay, Nantucket Harbor, Wellfleet, Barnstable, and Buzzards Bay (including Wareham and Westport), Plymouth/Duxbury/Kingston area; the Harbors of Scituate/Marshfield/Cohasset, and Salem Sound;
- In Maine, Casco Bay;
- Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog in Vermont.

More information: No Discharge Areas in New England
(www.epa.gov/ne/eco/nodiscrg/index.html)

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