



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

January 14, 2011

Massachusetts State House
Office of the Governor
Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick,

Over the past several months many members of your administration from the Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the office of Coastal Zone Management have worked diligently and collaboratively with a wide array of state, local and federal officials organized as the Merrimack River Beach Alliance (MRBA) to develop and implement methods to address the erosion on Salisbury Beach and Plum Island in the City of Newburyport and the Town of Newbury.

Working together, this team has achieved remarkable progress. Accomplishments to date include the placement of sand envelopes, the development and implementation of beach management plans, the deployment of fencing and protective hay bales, and others. Most importantly, however, is the unprecedented level of cooperation which has resulted in a climate of innovation and success.

Now, however, the team is faced with its most daunting challenge to date. Significant portions of the beach on Plum Island are vulnerable to winter pattern of erosion without adequate means of protection. Following months and weeks of productive dialogue, the potential exists to employ beach scraping as an emergency measure to protect homes, infrastructure and public safety.

Reaching this point has not come easily: every inch of movement forward has been propelled by careful consideration of the benefits and liabilities of beach scraping, its potential short and long-term impacts, and its viability in the context of available science and experience.

This week, the first of what will likely be many winter storms this season threatened Plum Island and Salisbury Beach. Given the probability of such threats over the next several months, the availability of limited beach scraping is critical to efforts to protect homes, natural resources and public safety. Therefore, we write to request that you take all appropriate actions to permit this tool as an emergency measure within the context of these ongoing discussions.

We make this request not arbitrarily, but based on the thoughtful and responsible work of your administration and the MRBA, and we do so with the utmost urgency. In turn, we pledge our continued efforts to ensure that responsible actions are taken in this regard.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Bruce Tarr
State Senator

Steven Baddour
State Senator



Michael Costello
State Representative



Harrett Stanley
State Representative