



MIAMI WATERKEEPER®

Here's how you can help!

Summary

South Florida beaches have been suffering from chronic beach closures this summer due to the presence of a fecal indicator bacteria: *Enterococcus*. This bacteria is often associated with sewage, indicating that the water may have unsafe contamination. Crandon Park has had some of the most closures due to bacteria levels in Miami Dade this summer, affecting Key Biscayne residents and businesses. Key Biscayne residents are deeply connected to their beaches – a defining feature of their community – and are eager to solve this problem.

Action Items for the Public

1) Get involved with Miami Waterkeeper

Miami Waterkeeper is a Miami-based nonprofit organization that advocates for South Florida's watershed and wildlife. Miami Waterkeeper employs a powerful combination of educational outreach, scientific research, advocacy, and when necessary, legal action to ensure South Florida's water is safe to swim, drink, and fish.

- Download Swim Guide: We post all of our water quality sample results on Swim Guide – a free and easy to use application that is available on your phone or computer. Check out the latest water quality information for Key Biscayne beaches by visiting Swim Guide today. You can also “sponsor” a site for weekly testing and get advertising space. Email hello@miamiwaterkeeper.org to find out how. www.theswimguide.org
- Become a member: Our members give us the ability to bring lawsuits on their behalf – so they are critical to any legal action we take related to water quality. www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/become_a_member
- Make a contribution: As a non-profit organization, we rely on individual and corporate contributions to keep us running. Your contribution supports our work to do the research, education, and advocacy necessary to solve this problem! www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/donate
www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/stop_beach_closures
- Report pollution and join our water patrol team. Attend one of our trainings to learn how to identify, document, and report pollution to us. Be our eyes on the water. https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/water_patrol

- Follow us online: A great way to stay up to date on the latest happenings is to follow us online on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram or subscribe to our quarterly newsletter. Facebook: @miamiwaterkeeper | Instagram @miamiwaterkeeper | Twitter: @miamiwaterkpr
- Attend an event: One of the best things you can do is become familiar with this issue. This makes you the best advocate you can be. Attend one of our upcoming events to learn more about how you can get involved and help. www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/events
- Sign a petition: We have several water quality petitions available on our website. Your participation allows us to show decision-makers and regulators how big of a problem this is within our community. https://www.miamiwaterkeeper.org/end_sewage_dumping

2) Take Action at the State level

- Call your representative and let them know about the beach closures and how they are affecting you. Ask for additional support for the Florida Healthy beaches water quality monitoring program! Funding cuts in recent years has meant the County has had to fund the program to keep monitoring going. We need to expand this important program! You can find them here: www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative
- Ask the state to increase funding for water quality monitoring of all kinds, including bacteria, toxic chemicals, and nutrients. Without baseline data, it's hard to know what's causing a problem.
- Ask for better enforcement of pollution and violations of permits or environmental laws. Many Clean Water Act laws and regulations are delegated to the state to enforce.
- Ask for prompt investigation and enforcement of illegal sewage spills.
- Ask them to prioritize developing resilient sewage infrastructure for South Florida to reduce sewage spills.

3) Take Action at the Miami-Dade County Level

- Call your County Commissioner and ask them to increase water quality monitoring programs! You can find your Commissioner here: <https://gisweb.miamidade.gov/CommunityServices>
- Demand that the County eliminate septic tanks by 2030! This is critical to improving water quality.
- Demand that the leaks and cracks in the sewage infrastructure be fixed.
- Demand more resiliency in the sewage infrastructure to prevent spills and leaks during storms and flooding.
- Ask for higher levels of wastewater treatment before wastewater is pumped through the outfall pipe into the ocean or into deep wells.

- Ask for sustainable wastewater reuse projects with high treatment levels that benefit the Bay -- instead of contaminating it. Ask for wetland rehydration, aquifer recharge, and increased freshwater for Biscayne Bay.

4) Local Level

- Call your local Councilmember and request additional signage when beaches are closed and a robust public notification campaign. Ask for increased enforcement presence on beaches when they are closed to notify visitors about water quality hazards and swim advisories.
- Call your local Councilmember and ask for a fertilizer ordinance within the municipality that requires the implementation of Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff, fertilizers, and nutrient loading.
- Ask for mandatory stormwater runoff training for landscapers within the municipality and ask for a complete ban on fertilizer application during the summer months.
- Don't throw landscape debris into waterways or down storm drains.
- Request that your beach managers stop burying seaweed under the sand where it encourages bacteria growth!

