

November 21, 2016

The Corporation of the Town of Kingsville
Manager of Facilities and Property
2021 Division Road North
Kingsville, ON N9Y 2Y9

Dear Mr. Del Greco,

In response to your letter dated September 30, 2016, I would like to address your request for enhanced beach sampling for the detection of E. coli at three beaches in the Kingsville area, specifically Mettawas Beach, Cedar Island, and Cedar Beach.

Currently, the health unit conducts sampling at ten beaches in the Windsor-Essex County region. Prior to the beginning of each beach season an environmental survey is completed including a review of historical data and identification of possible sources of contamination. Beach sampling is completed by two public health inspectors every Wednesday from June to mid-September for a period of approximately 14 weeks. These samples are then couriered to the public health laboratory in London and analyzed within one day of collection. In addition to the sampling, a surveillance report is completed on each beach including water and ambient air temperature, rainfall, sky conditions, wind speed, water clarity and turbidity, wave height and sources of pollution. Results of the weekly testing are then communicated to the general public through the health unit's website, media outlets, and beach signage.

According to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's (MOHLTC) guidance document for Beach Management, sampling frequency is based on risk assessment and more frequent sampling may be conducted for beaches that are prone to fluctuations in environmental conditions. Likewise, sampling may be reduced to once per month if historical data indicates consistent results for an entire beach season.

Due to requirements in the Ontario Public Health Standards, beach sampling and testing must be completed by public health staff using the public health laboratory. For health and safety reasons two public health inspectors are required to complete this task. The sampling for all ten area beaches requires a full day's work. Enhanced sampling would take an additional day utilizing limited resources and taking staff away from other duties. Once established, the sampling scheduling must be maintained the entire beach season. In addition, a second set of samples may not produce the results council is seeking; samples taken on a Monday or Tuesday may yield acceptable results but samples on the Wednesday or Thursday may be unacceptable resulting in a posting of the beach. Please note that sampling and testing is not available during the weekend. These issues present true challenges for our health unit as we consider your request.

However, in outlining the above, the health unit respectfully provides the following possible options which warrant further investigation:

1. Meet with council to review the results of the annual environmental assessment which will be conducted at the beginning of the 2017 beach season and address any possible sources of contamination. These actions may impact water quality results for the upcoming season.
2. There is the opportunity each year for health units to submit one-time grant requests to the MOHLTC. Our proposal could be for funds to enhance beach sampling, however grant submissions are not likely to be approved prior to the completion of beach season. In addition, the submission would have to be paired with another health unit initiative to allow for the hiring of two public health inspector students for full time hours for the 14-week beach season. This is necessary as we do not have the ability to use existing staff and our Collective Agreement does not allow for the hiring of part-time workers. This plan would augment existing staff during a very busy time causing the least amount of disruption to current workloads. The cost for the hiring of two public health inspector students and associated mileage costs would amount to \$22,100. The actual cost for the additional one day of sampling would be \$5,463 for the 14-week season. Additional costs such as the courier service and the impact of additional testing on the public health laboratory have not been fully investigated at this time.
3. Investigate municipal funding for costs associated with the beach sampling program for 2017. Again, due to the issues cited above, we would have to look at covering the full amount of \$22,100. The logistics of the sampling and laboratory testing would still require further investigation.

Finally, we are currently working with our epidemiologist to review past data on Kingsville area beaches. I would like to extend an offer to council to present an overview of our findings and review previous environmental assessments at a future council meeting.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Yours truly,



Theresa Marentette RN, MSc.
Director, Health Protection & Chief Nursing Officer
Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

cc: Gary Kirk, Medical Officer of Health & CEO
Wajid Ahmed, Associate Medical Officer of Health
Mike Tudor, Manager, Health Inspection, WECHU