

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION REOPENS MORE SANDY-DAMAGED SHELLFISH BEDS IN SOUTHERN BARNEGAT BAY

(13/P28) TRENTON - Shellfish beds in southern Barnegat Bay, from Barnegat Inlet south to an area north of Little Egg Harbor, will reopen at sunrise on Friday, March 29, as a result of an order signed by Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin.

DEP tissue sampling of shellfish from this area of the bay now meet standards set by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, a state and federal cooperative effort that monitors and ensures the health safety of shellfish.

These beds had been closed since October 29 as part of a statewide closure of all New Jersey shellfish beds to commercial and recreational harvesting due to concerns over degradation of coastal water quality caused by Superstorm Sandy.

"We are another step closer to having all shellfish beds in Barnegat Bay reopened and we're pleased the people will be able to go back to work in this area of the bay," Commissioner Martin said.

Shellfish beds in two small areas of Barnegat Bay - near Waretown and in Little Egg Harbor - remain closed, as do shellfish beds in Raritan Bay. The DEP continues to monitor water quality and shellfish tissue in these areas and will reopen these beds when monitoring and sampling criteria are met.

To see a copy of today's signed order and a map showing the exact location of the shellfish beds that will reopen on Friday, visit: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bmw/sandy/20130328bb3reopening.pdf>

For a map of all reopened shellfish beds, visit <http://www.nj.gov/dep/wms/bmw/sandy.html>

For more on DEP's Marine Water Monitoring, visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bmw/>