

# Metropolitan Beaches Commission Summit on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion June 18 , 2022



**Metopolitan Beaches Commission  
The State House  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133**



Sen. Brendan Crighton & Rep. Adrian Madaro  
Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chairs

Chris Mancini & Bruce Berman  
Save the Harbor/Save the Bay

**After releasing reports in 2008 and 2014 on maintenance and infrastructure improvements on our region's public beaches, the Commission began to examine all aspects of its work through a lens of racial justice and equity.**

**As protests against police brutality and systemic racism were breaking out across the country, the MBC scheduled public hearings on racial injustice in our own backyard.**

**As we began our hearings, it quickly became clear that the perceptions people of color have of our public beaches have been shaped by their personal experiences and those of their friends and families, who reported feeling unwelcome and being uncomfortable at the beach.**

**Those perceptions were also influenced  
by historic and current images of  
violence and conflict on our beaches,  
with which we are all familiar.**



**OFFICIALS CALLING FOR PEACE ON  
BEACHES AFTER VIOLENT WEEKENDS**

**RIGHT  
NOW**

**5** abc  
WCVB

A photograph of three men standing on a beach. The man on the left is wearing sunglasses and a dark blue patterned shirt. The man in the center has a grey beard and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt. The man on the right is wearing glasses and a dark grey button-down shirt. They are all looking towards the camera. The background shows a blue ocean and a clear sky.

**And reaffirm our commitment to equity,  
diversity and inclusive access to our  
region's public beaches.**

**OFFICIALS CALLING FOR PEACE ON  
BEACHES AFTER VIOLENT WEEKENDS**

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WCVB

**Following this Summit, the Commission intends to present our recommendations and a statement of our shared vision and values for the Metropolitan Beaches to the Legislature, the Administration, the Department of Conservation & Recreation and the public.**

**Please share your thoughts and comments with us by email to [info@savetheharbor.org](mailto:info@savetheharbor.org)**



**MBC Hearing #1**  
**Improving Beach Access for**  
**People of Color**

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**May 6, 2021**

# Abdi Ali



**East Boston Anti-Racism  
Community Coalition**

“Free cultural activities are really important. When I hear music that is relevant and inviting to me, I feel welcome and comfortable in that public space.”

# Following the first hearing, the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay

- Increased diversity on the Metropolitan Beaches Commission
- Increased outreach to people of color, people with disabilities, and people who do not speak English as their primary language.
- Worked with our youth development and community partners to provide free life jackets and water safety instruction to kids of color, who are 6 times as likely to die from drowning as white kids.
- Expanded our Better Beaches Program Partnership with DCR, funding 40 new program partners and scores of new free beach events to improve beach access for people of color, people with disabilities, and people who do not speak English as their first language.

**We increased the diversity of our Better Beaches Program Partnership with DCR, adding 40 new program partners.**



**You can find a complete list of 2022 Better Beaches Program Partnership Grant Recipients and a calendar of events at [blog.savetheharbor.org](https://blog.savetheharbor.org)**

# In 2022 we awarded more than \$250,000 in Better Beaches Program grants to 62 organizations and creatives to support 100 free beach events and programs in 9 communities

including major grants to support Triangle Inc.'s Beach:Ability, performances by The Veronica Robles Cultural Center and A Trike Called Funk.



**It's time to hear  
from you.**

**MBC Hearing #2**  
**Improving Beach Access**  
**for People with Disabilities**

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**November 30, 2021**

# Colonel (Retired) Andrea Gayle-Bennett



Disabled American Veterans  
Department of Massachusetts

“Disabilities can make it hard to access areas that do not have ramps, accessible walkways and bathrooms. Accessibility to the beach is limited to those with physical disabilities. This turns them into spectators instead of participants.”



# Following the second hearing, the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay:

- Purchased “Mobility Mats” and beach wheelchairs, so that people with physical disabilities can have access to the beach and the water.
- Worked with the Department of Conservation & Recreation to secure funds to repair and maintain ramps, stairways and paths on our region’s public beaches, which in many instances present obstacles to access for people with disabilities, older adults and parents with strollers.
- Hosted beach clean-ups in the region’s waterfront neighborhoods and beachfront communities, to help DCR remove truckloads of sand, stones, trash, weeds and debris from rails, trails and paths.

# East Boston

TIMES-FREE PRESS

John Lynds | August 18, 2021

## Disability community celebrates Beach:Ability at Constitution Beach



The Wallis family from Malden joined Triangle, Inc. and Save the Harbor at Beach:Ability at Constitution Beach. Shown are dad Thom and daughter Sylvie waving a floating wheel chair.

On Saturday, more than 125 individuals with disabilities came together to enjoy a fun-filled day at Constitution Beach.

The Beach:Ability at Constitution Beach program was created several years ago through a grant from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Better Beaches program with support by DCR's Universal Access Program. The yearly event hosted by Triangle, Inc. highlights programs that make Massachusetts public beaches, like the one in Eastie, accessible to the disability community.

As part of this year's event, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay donated beach wheelchairs to three local non-profit organizations serving the disability community of greater Boston.

"It fills my heart with joy to see people of all ages and abilities come together on a beautiful summer day to celebrate clean water at Constitution Beach," said Rep. Adrian Madaro, who Co-Chairs the Metropolitan Beaches

Commission and was instrumental in securing funds to make Beach:Ability possible. "Thanks to Triangle, Inc. and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for taking the lead and making it happen again this year."

CEO of Triangle, Inc. Coleman Nee said Triangle was excited to return to Constitution Beach for its second Beach:Ability event.

"For many in the Disability Community, awareness of these amazing beaches and/or perceptions of their accessibility have, in the past, presented barriers to a fully inclusive public waterfront," said Nee. "We hope that this event helps change those beliefs and highlights the great work of our partners at DCR's Universal Access Program and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay to ensure that equipment such as mobi-mats, sand wheelchairs and floating swim chairs are available at all of Massachusetts public beaches."

Executive Director of

the Harbor/Save the Bay Chris Mancini said as part of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's steadfast commitment to accessibility, inclusion, diversity, and equity, he was thrilled to partner with Triangle to make sure the region's amazing public beaches are welcoming to the disability community.

"We are proud to extend these efforts by donating additional accessible sand and swim wheelchairs to area nonprofits serving the disability community, including the South Boston Neighborhood House, ARC of the South Shore, and Triangle," he said.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Director of Development Patricia Salic was also moved by Beach:Ability and thanked all those that took part. She took a few moments on Saturday morning to thank Save the Harbor's Better Beaches program and policy partners and event sponsors. These included



Triangle community members Liam (left) and Dustin (in chair) from Danvers head for the water's edge with Triangle's allies Melissa Brent and John Kestener and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Chris Mancini.

Harpoon Brewery, JetBlue, the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation, P&G Gillette, National Grid, Comcast, Beacon Capital Partners, Mix 104.1 Boston Centers for Youth & Families, The YMCA of Greater Boston, The Daily Catch, Boston Event Specialists, the Blue Sky Collaborative, and Keezer Sportswear for their support, as well as the nearly 1,000 individuals who contributed to the support of the Harpoon Shamrock Splash.

Saturday's event was one of scores of events planned for the region's public beaches from Nahant to Nantasket this summer, as part of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Better Beaches program partnership with DCR. To find out more about events on your favorite beach, visit their website at [www.savetheharbor.org](http://www.savetheharbor.org) and [@savetheharbor](https://twitter.com/savetheharbor) on social media.

# Patch

Boston

Maria Rodriguez | October 1, 2021

## Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Partners with Save the Harbor for an End-of-the-Summer Cleanup at M Street Beach



Volunteers from Blue Cross Blue Shield ready to start their Day of Service at M Street Beach.



From left to right: Chris Mancini of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, Alexis Higgins and Stacy McDonald of Blue Cross Blue Shield, and state Rep. David Biele at the M Street Beach cleanup.



Volunteers from Blue Cross Blue Shield ready to start their Day of Service at M Street Beach.

On September 23rd, 20 volunteers from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts collaborated with Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to clean up South Boston's M Street Beach.

During Blue Cross Blue Shield's 11th Annual Day of Service, volunteers cleared ramps, stairways, and removed trash and invasive weeds from M Street Beach. A total of 16 bags of trash and weeds were collected from this cleanup.

"Thanks to Save the Harbor and their community partners at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts for helping to get our beaches ready for fall and for making them more accessible to people with disabilities," said State Rep. and Metropolitan Beaches Commissioner David Biele.

DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery shared that sentiment. "We'd like to thank Save the Harbor and their

corporate and community partners for volunteering to help DCR staff with the end-of-summer beach clean-up last week. Save the Harbor's year-long commitment to caring for the environment makes them valued collaborators in every season."

This summer season brought many beachgoers from all over Boston and the Commonwealth. As a result of the volunteers' hard work, M Street Beach is now ready for the fall season.

"Blue Cross is proud to support Save the Harbor and their efforts to make M Street Beach accessible for everyone," said Jeff Bellows, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs. "We've been partnering with Save the Harbor for over a decade through our annual Service Day and are always excited to give our colleagues the opportunity to come together to protect Boston Harbor and give back to the South Boston community."

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Executive Director Chris Mancini was at the cleanup. "South Boston's beaches are important recreational assets for our community and all the region's residents," said Mancini. "Thanks to the great team at DCR and to BCBSMA for their partnership and dedication to caring for and sharing these spectacular resources, and thanks to Rep. Biele and the Metropolitan Beaches Commission for helping us secure funds for mobility mats and beach wheelchairs."

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay is a non-profit, public interest harbor advocacy organization made up of thousands of citizens as well as civic, corporate, cultural, and community leaders and scientists. Their mission is to restore and protect Boston Harbor, Massachusetts Bay, and the marine environment and share them with the public for all to enjoy.

To find out more about Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, visit their website at [savetheharbor.org](http://savetheharbor.org).

**It's time to hear  
from you.**

**MBC Hearing #3**  
**Overcoming Language**  
**Barriers to Beach Access**

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**February 9, 2022**

# Julia Mejia



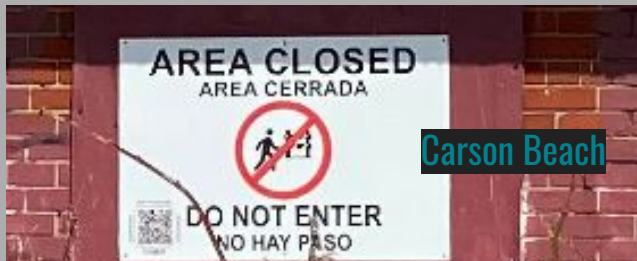
**Boston City Councilor-at-Large**

“When I look at the signs on our public beaches, everything is still very much in English. If we are serious about creating spaces where people are seen and reflected, then translation and information justice has to be a part of that conversation.”

In the winter of 2022, Save the Harbor conducted a comprehensive survey of signage on the region's public beaches in Nahant, Lynn, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy and Hull.



# Of the 250 signs we examined, just four were in languages other than English.



Carson Beach



Winthrop Beach



King's Beach



Nahant Beach

# At the hearing, Acting DCR Commissioner Stephanie Cooper made a public commitment to implement multilingual signage using QR codes at DCR's beaches and parks and provide translation on their website. That process is underway.

## The Daily News Interactive.com

BY ADAM BASS | February 9, 2022

### CRIGHTON: SIGN LANGUAGE A BARRIER TO BEACH SAFETY



State Sen. Brendan Crygton hosted a meeting to discuss language barriers with beach safety signage at King's Beach in Lynn (Special Issue).

LYNN State Sen. Brendan Crygton (D-Lynn) held a hearing over Zoom Wednesday morning, with beachers in East Boston and members of the Metropolitan Bay Beaches Commission (MBC), this is to change the signs to make them more accessible for those who speak multiple languages.

those who spoke a different language," Berman said. "Other beachers at the meeting that was in English and Spanish including warning flags on the beach. Additionally, the survey found that online resources for water quality and flags seen only in English.

Crygton, who serves as the co-chair of the commission, said one of the biggest challenges his constituents face is that they cannot understand safety signs at meeting that was taken last week at King's Beach in East Boston. Berman said that the most common English is not their first language, a different language and other solutions include having QR codes on signs that provide a link to water quality resources and other information in different languages.

"In my district, we have 40 to 25 percent of families in Massachusetts speak Spanish," he said. "How does a family fully understand the beach if they can't read the signs and know what the program is?"

Other solutions include having QR codes on signs that provide a link to water quality resources and other information in different languages. The survey also found that only four signs out of 240 in Massachusetts beaches were multilingual. Crygton said he will introduce legislation that would automatically have information about the beach in real time.

## LOCKEDLOCAL.com

Chris Van Buskirk | February 10, 2022

### Multilingual signage changes, QR codes planned for Massachusetts beaches



A sign post on the beach at evening King's beach reminds people about signs associated with their dogs. (Special Issue Staff Photo/Chris Van Buskirk)

Advocates for public beaches on Feb. 9 called for multilingual signage at beaches across the Boston area. Those who do not speak English can better understand safety information and rules as they take to the water, and they get some welcome news from a top state official.

"If we can't have inclusivity and equality on our beaches, just to perpetuate a great quote from our last hearing that we all know, folks will become spectators on these beaches when they should be involved, active participants," said the HarborSave the Bay Executive Director Chris Mancini at the virtual meeting.

"This is a really important issue to everybody, and we're all working together on this, knowing that it's a challenge, and we have a lot of steps to go."

"multilingual resources they need," she said. "Again, we're already seeing this on a couple of the DCR signs, and we would love to see it used for translation purposes as well."

New York City, Anderson said, is using social media accounts to post beach advisories with links to information in other languages and American Sign Language. In Connecticut, officials are offering resources digitally to allow for information in multiple languages, she said.

"We are also looking at retooling our waterfront signage, the beach rules signs and no dogs, and we are going to be using QR codes," Cooper said. "The idea is that you can scan your phone and that gives you that information. It's all the major languages that can be spoken, And the signs that we've designed so far, we have, using the environmental justice language lens, we have prioritized the languages that are most spoken in those communities."

Rep. Adrian Madano, co-chair of the Metropolitan Bay Beaches Commission, said officials must guarantee that all people enjoy public beaches.

"These language barriers are quite concerning," he said. "In East Boston, language justice and language access are not merely aspirational; they're absolute necessities to ensure the safety, wellbeing and success of all of our neighbors. Language access on our beaches creates providing critical safety information about water quality, weather conditions, improving activities and general beach safety knowledge."

"It's an incredibly easy thing to put on physical signage as I link people to the

## East Boston TIMES-FREE PRESS

John Lynds | February 16, 2022

### Hearing Focuses on Language Barriers on Area Beaches



Photo by Chris Van Buskirk for LockedLocal.com

At last Wednesday's Metropolitan Bay Beaches Commission meeting, Commission Co-Chair Rep. Adrian Madano made a shocking revelation.

"In my district of East Boston, I am pleased to represent an incredibly vibrant community and our diversity is one of our proudest assets," said Madano. "I am fortunate to represent so many people of different ethnic backgrounds and perspectives. About 50% of our community is foreign born and many residents are non-native English speakers. Yet at Constitution Beach, East Boston's only public beach and the only public beach in the city, the signage is only in English. These language barriers are quite concerning. In East Boston, language justice and language access are not merely aspirational; they are absolute necessities to ensure the safety, wellbeing and success of all of our neighbors."

Madano's testimony came at a Beach Commission hearing focused on language barriers on area beaches.

"Language access on our beaches creates providing critical safety information about water quality, weather conditions, improving activities and general beach safety knowledge," continued Madano. "Empowering residents with the tools to make informed decisions while at our beaches helps create overall public safety and enjoyment. This starts with

just four of them were in Spanish, said the Commission. "We are focused on having our signs accessible and safe," said Acting DCR Commissioner Stephanie Cooper. "We also need to have signage that people who may not speak English in their primary language. Last May, the Beach Commission heard from I need to know to enjoy the diverse group of civic leaders and community members about ways in which we could increase diversity on the beach and in our beach programming."

"We are focused on having our signs accessible and safe," said Acting DCR Commissioner Stephanie Cooper. "We also need to have signage that people who may not speak English in their primary language. Last May, the Beach Commission heard from I need to know to enjoy the diverse group of civic leaders and community members about ways in which we could increase diversity on the beach and in our beach programming."

In November, the Beach Commission focused on ways to increase and improve access for people with disabilities on the Metropolitan Region's public beaches. The most recent hearing focused on ways to improve language barriers that prevent people from safely enjoying their beaches.

"Overcoming language barriers is a key focus," said Executive Director of Save the Harbor Save the Bay Chris Mancini. "If we don't have diversity in programs and signage on our beaches, folks will be forced to be spectators when they should be involved, active participants."

At the hearing participants heard presentations on current and best practices for multilingual signage and websites. Save the HarborSave the Bay (SHSB) from Cambridge, Massachusetts made a presentation about using QR codes on beach signage to provide a way to connect people to the multilingual resources they need. QR codes are already in use on signs at Revere Beach and elsewhere.

"Of the 240 signs we looked at across Massachusetts, only

Photo by Chris Van Buskirk for LockedLocal.com



**We also asked the Department of Public Health to work with DCR, the MWRA and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay to improve the accuracy of their beach posting protocols, which fail to protect the public's health.**

**For example, in 2021 75% of the required posts and red flags at Constitution Beach in East Boston were wrong, which is unacceptable.**

**This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the Department's beach water quality website is only available in English and hasn't been updated since 2001.**

**Though we had a productive meeting with DPH last week, they "politely declined" our request to join us today and share their thoughts on posting and flagging accuracy or their plans and timeline to make their beach water quality website available in languages other than English.**

Timely and accurate information about water quality, safety, and beach regulations needs to be available to everyone, including the more than 100,000 regional residents who don't speak English as their first language.

# Following the third hearing, the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay

- Produced and distributed a report on Best Practices for multi-lingual signage, which you can find and translate on the MBC's webpage at <https://www.savetheharbor.org/current-mbc>
- Made all subsequent MBC hearing and meeting notices and press releases available at <http://blog.savetheharbor.org> where they can be easily translated into 109 languages using Google Translate.
- Added live interpretation at all MBC hearings.
- Are working with DCR, the MWRA and the City of Boston to implement best practices for multilingual signage.
- Posted the FAQ's from the Bureau of Environmental Health's website on our blog, where they are available in 109 languages using Google Translate.

**It's time to hear from you.**

Es hora de saber de ti.

是时候听取您的意见了。

Li lè pou w tande w.

حان الوقت للتواصل معك.

É hora de ouvir de você.

**Next Steps:  
MBC Hearing #4  
To hear from youth and teens**

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**Summer, 2022**

# Reginald Talbert



**Site Manager  
Inner City Weightlifting**

“We really need to find more things for these kids to do in the summer.”

**Thanks to Co-Chairs Brendan Crighton and  
Adrian Madaro & the Legislative and Community  
members of the Metropolitan Beaches  
Commission, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay  
Board of Directors and staff, and the more than  
200 people who took part in these hearings.**

**Thank to all who participated in the hearings, including** Abdi Ali, Adam Bass, Rep. Adrian Madaro, Adrian Muir, Adriana Paz, AJ Capano, Aleena Mangham, Alex DeFronzo, Alice Fisher, Alicia Grimaldi, Amy Schofield, Andrea Baez, Andrea Contreras, Andrea Gayle-Bennett, Andrea Patton, Angela Ponte, Antonio Barletta, B.G. Shanklin, Barbara Bishop, Barbara Caputo Kelly, Beth Ineson, Beth Neal, Bianca Beltran, Bob Chen, Sen. Brendan Crighton, Bridget Ryan, Bruce Berman, Caitlin Stapleton, Carlos Prudencio, Carol Haney, Caroline Adamson, Charlie Jewell, Chris Goodwin, Chris Mancini, Chris Marchi, Chris Puiia, Chris Van Buskirk, Christian Merfeld, Christian R. Scorzoni, Esq., Christopher Burrell, Christopher Byner, Christopher DeFilippis, Cindy Theodore, Coleman Nee, Conor O'Shaughnessy, Craig Cashman, Rep. Daniel Hun, Daniel Kenary, Daniel Padien, Daniel West Cohen, Daria Afshar, Rep. David Biele, David Coffin, David Lee, David Spillane, AICP, RIBA, Debbie King, Deborah Rosa, Denise DosSantos, Denise Molina Capers, Dennis Conway, Donald Bossi, Rep. Donald Wong, Doneeca Thurston, Doug Newton, Douglas Gutro, Elisabeth Jackson, Elizabeth McLaughlin, Elle Baker, Ellice Patterson, Elliott Juul-Larsen, Elsa Flores, ETTY Padmodipoetro, Eugene Kennedy, Gayana Daniel, Geordie Enoch, Ghizlane (Ghiz) Benzerdjeb, Gloribel Rivas, Jacqueline Chavez, Jason McCann, Jason Sandoval, JD Conte, Jenn Brundage, Jenn Meakem, Jennifer Constable, Jennifer Norwood, Jessenia Urrea, Rep. Jessica Giannino, Jessica Martinez, Jim Pitrolo, Joan Delaney, Rep. Joan Meschino, Joanne McDevitt, Joao Dos Santos, Joe Christo, John Allen, Sen. John Keenan, John Lynds, Jon Hamilton, Jonathan Thibault, Joseph Cappuccio, Joseph Gaeta, Joseph P. Newman, Joseph R. Savage, Joye Williams, Julia Mejia, Julie Pagano, Julie Simpson, Ph.D, Kannan Thiruvengadam, Karen Fernandes, Karen Pitrolo, Karen Zirkle, Kathy Lafferty, Kay Smith, Keith, Mahoney, Kristen Barry, Kristen McCosh, Kristen Wyman, Laura A. Burke, Leonard Olsen, Lindsey Santana, Lisa Larimer, Sen. Lydia Edwards, Maeve Kidney, Magdalena Ayed, Malene Welch, Maria Rodriguez, Martynas Valys, Mary Mitchell, Mary Usovicz, Maya Smith, Mayolina Mayolina, Meghan Smith, Mercy Robinson, Michael Kineavy, Michael Leon, Esq., Dr. Michael Myers, Mimi Huckins, Nicholas Bradley, Nicholas Martin, Nicole McClain, Niki Ghosh, Nikki Sanders, Nina Liang, Olivia Barker, Pam Goodman, Paola Villatoro, Patricia Salic, Sen. Patrick O'Connor, Patsy Williams, Patti Capano, Paul D. Foster, Paul Newman, Philip Chong, Ralph Decicco, Reginald Talbert, Rich Ackerman, Rita Lara, Robert Tucker, Rosa Herrero, Roxana Aguirre, Ruth Nieves, Ryan DeRoche, Ryan McGeown-Conron, Sabrina Suros, Samantha Fontenelle, Sandra Saavedra, Sara-Rose Brenner, Sarah Francis, Sean Reid, Shavel'le Olivier, Stephanie Burke, Stephanie Cooper, Stephanie Ortha, Susan Hamilton, Susan Tracy, Rep. Tackey Chan, Thomas N. O'Brien, Tiffani Caballero, Tom Cox, Tom McCarthy, V Mon, and Veronica Robles.



# Chris Mancini



**Executive Director,  
Save the Harbor/Save the Bay**

“As an environmentalist I have come to value biodiversity as a measure of the health of an ecosystem.

As an advocate for justice and change, I see diversity on our beaches as an important measure of the health of our community.”



Thanks for joining us today.

**Enjoy Father's Day &  
Have a Happy Juneteenth!**

**Comments, suggestions, questions?**

**Info@[savetheharbor.org](mailto:info@savetheharbor.org)**