

New Jersey Senators Want Beach Re-Opened Before Summer

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New Jersey Senators, Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez are strongly urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to complete their search and recovery of UXO on Surf City beach by the start of summer. As reported in the UXO News Wire Service article on 13 March, the USACE lead beach replenishment project resulted in live WWII era fuzes being deposited onto the New Jersey beach.

In a public statement, Senator Lautenberg was quoted as saying: "with warm weather on the horizon and thousands of families planning trips to the beach, these munitions must be removed and removed quickly." A follow up statement by Senator Menendez stated, "the federal government has the responsibility to make sure the beach is not a minefield by the time Memorial Day arrives."

A spokesperson for the USACE said that they are doing everything they can to have the beaches ready by Memorial Day, but could not make any guarantees. The schedule of the work will be driven in part on how or who the USACE selects to recover and dispose of the UXO. If a contractor is selected for the removal and disposal operations, an explosive safety submission (ESS) is required by DoD and Army policy. This could add significant delay to the project and push the schedule well beyond the summer. If military EOD is used to support the UXO operations, an ESS would not be required and the work could begin sooner.

With a little over two months before Memorial Day (May 28th), the pressure is certainly on the USACE to act quickly. This article is another example of why a detailed inventory of underwater munitions disposal sites is needed. The Army is reportedly working on an inventory or report of underwater CWM munitions disposal sites but has yet to make the findings available to the public.