Sea-Level Rise Legislation Update

S.L. 2012-202 (HB819)

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DENR Mission Statement

Preamble

It is recognized that the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources' primary mission is to protect North Carolina's environment and natural resources. In executing this mission, DENR operates with the broad-based understanding that the following three fundamental principles are integral components of its protective mandate.

Fundamental Philosophy: In its essence, DENR is a service organization. Whether managing parks and zoos or issuing permits, agency personnel, operating within the confines of the regulations, must always be a resource of invaluable public assistance, rather than a bureaucratic obstacle of resistance.

Fundamental Economics: Acknowledging that a traditional cost/benefit analysis is not always fully applicable to matters of the environment and public recreation, the agency will be continually cognizant that an economic cost/benefit analysis is an integral component of DENR's public service endeavor.

Fundamental Science: That all decisions are made with a respect and understanding that environmental science is quite complex, comprised of many components, and most importantly, contains diversity of opinion. In this regard, all public programs and scientific conclusions must be reflective of input from a variety of legitimate, diverse and thoughtful perspectives.

The Outcome

That a collaborative stewardship among the citizens, government regulators and the business community will maintain and enhance North Carolina's environment and natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone living in or visiting our great state.
H819 (SL 2012-202) requirements

- Directs Science Panel to include a comprehensive review and summary of peer-reviewed scientific literature that address the full range of global, regional, and North Carolina-specific sea-level change data and hypotheses.
- CRC and Science Panel shall define the assumptions and limitations of predictive modeling used to predict future sea-level scenarios.
H819 (SL 2012-202) requirements

• CRC shall make this report available to the general public and allow for submittal of public comments including a public hearing at the first regularly scheduled meeting after March 31, 2015.

• CRC shall study the economic and environmental costs and benefits to the North Carolina coastal region of developing, or not developing, sea-level regulations and policies.***(not CRC’s intent)

• CRC shall compare the determination of sea level based on historical calculations versus predictive models.
H819 (SL 2012-202) requirements

- Consider oceanfront and estuarine shorelines for dealing with sea-level assessment and not use one single sea-level rate for the entire coast.
- For oceanfront shorelines, use no fewer than the four BIMP regions (or proxies).
- Present draft reports to the general public and receive comments no later than December 31, 2015.
- Present these reports, including public comments and any policies the CRC has adopted or may be considering to the General Assembly Environmental Review Commission no later than March 1, 2016.
The purpose of the Assessment is to report the current understanding of past, current, and potential future sea-level change in North Carolina, not to define regulatory rates.
Specific Questions to be Addressed

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5: What is the potential range of future sea-level change in North Carolina at multiple timescales and geographic regions?

6: Quantify or characterize your confidence in the projections.
Process proposal

• CRC
  - review charge to Science Panel (Feb. 2013)
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  - participation in co-author selection (ongoing)
  - participation in expert reviewer selection (ongoing)

• DCM
  - invite co-authors & reviewers (spring/summer 2013)
  - coordinate & support Science Panel (ongoing)
  - evaluate options for completing economic & environmental study (possible contract)
Send comments or questions to:

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