



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

Office of Communications • Mark Dallas Loeffler, Director
1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • Fax: 512-475-1415

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2009

Contact: Jim Suydam
(512) 463-5339
(512) 417-5382 cell

Patterson proposes new rules for recovering from coastal disasters

Changes provide clarity, reliability for coastal residents after big storms

AUSTIN — Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, today proposed new rules to help coastal communities recover from the next big storm.

“Hurricane Ike revealed some shortcomings in our beach and dune rules that actually made it harder for those suffering the most to recover from a storm,” Patterson said. “After Ike, we issued temporary emergency rules to remedy those shortcomings. The proposed new rules will formalize those changes and make them effective for two years.”

Patterson said the new rules would give property owners clarity and certainty when it comes to recovery measures allowed in the wake of a coastal disaster.

The proposed changes, now posted in the Texas Register for public comment, will allow the Texas Land Commissioner to issue a disaster recovery order that will:

- Allow local governments to issue permits to property owners to start repairs to make their property habitable and prevent further damage — even if the structure is on the beach
- Allow the construction of clay core dunes to provide stability for restored dunes and to encourage dune restoration activities that provide better shoreline protection
- Allow the repair of enclosed spaces with breakaway or louvered walls at ground level for houses on the beach in order for residents to secure personal property in the wake of a storm
- Allow the repair of properties that make use of fibercrete to restore access for the disabled
- Authorizes dune restoration in an area no more than 30 feet seaward of the post-disaster landward boundary of the public beach to encourage dune restoration.
- Allow a local government to temporarily close beach access points damaged beyond repair or blocked by a shore protection project, so long as they notify the Land Office and provide a plan to re-open the access point no later than six months prior to the expiration of the disaster recovery order

A complete copy of the proposed new rules may be found on-line at www.glo.state.tx.us.

Patterson said the proposed changes evolved after listening to the needs of coastal communities still struggling to recover from Hurricane Ike.

“These new rules make it clear what coastal communities can do following a disaster like Hurricane Ike,” Patterson said. “This will make it easier for property owners and businesses to repair and protect their investments.”

###