

SOUTH CAROLINA'S SHORELINE CHANGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: RESEARCH PRIORITIES AND POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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The South Carolina Beachfront Management Act and associated regulations were adopted in 1988, and over the past two decades, these rules have significantly limited development and hard stabilization of the beachfront in many areas. Continued renourishment efforts have kept pace with erosion, but are costly and considered by many to be a medium-term solution to chronic erosion. As beachfront lots have become increasingly scarce, estuarine shorelines have become equally desirable for development. These shorelines face similar threats from erosion, sea level rise, and storm events, and create an increasing demand for erosion control structures and other alterations. Complex regulatory, economic, environmental, and legal issues, together with natural and socioeconomic data limitations, result in an unclear understanding of future shoreline changes in South Carolina, and our ability to adapt to those changes.

In 2007, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control – Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC-OCRM) began a Shoreline Change Initiative to organize existing data collection and research efforts, identify additional research needs, and formulate policy options to guide the future management of South Carolina's beachfront and estuarine shorelines.

As an integral part of this initiative, a 23-member Shoreline Change Advisory Committee was established and includes a broad cross-section of coastal professionals and stakeholders. The Committee has convened monthly to identify and explore new ways to resolve use conflicts and reduce socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities related to shoreline changes in the South Carolina coastal zone. The Committee developed several policy options that are specific to SCDHEC-OCRM authorities and activities, and some options relate to other federal, state, regional, or local entities. The policy options cover a range of topic areas including beachfront retreat policies and incentives, beach renourishment planning, hard erosion control alternatives, local coordination, and estuarine shoreline buffers.

Website: http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/ocrm/science/shoreline_comm.htm

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