

Public Comment/Input from September 14, 2009 Terminal Groin Study Kickoff Meeting
New Bern

The following oral comments were received during the September 14 meeting:

Andy Sayre, Village Council of Bald Head Island, stated much of what I have read about terminal groins refers to them as an added tool for beach renourishment or stabilization. For Bald Head Island this is a gross understatement. A terminal groin or terminal groin field may be essential for the sustainability of Bald Head Island. If this is not a perfect terminal groin, we do not want to see Bald Head Island on the cutting room floor. This is an issue that is very important to us.

Marty Cooke, Brunswick County Commission, stated I am not here as a scientist or an expert. I am a county commissioner and as a commissioner I have some concerns. We were discussing terminal groins and the stability of beaches at a meeting in Hickory at the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners meeting. We were talking about the stability of beaches and I stated that terminal groins are something that I am concerned about because I think that it has a viable answer. There was an effective study regarding coastal resources dynamics of terminal groins presented in June. The Pea Island example at Oregon Inlet was shown and the only way to save the bridge was to put in a terminal groin. After seeing this and other studies about six months earlier it made me a believer. I went from a disbeliever to a believer after I saw that a terminal groin has sand that you put around it and it causes stability. If you look at Oregon Inlet in the twenty year study, every two months they were able to show that there was no erosion except for two years which were not back to back. They went down mile by mile for six miles and showed that there was no impact for six miles. I am a layman, not a scientist, I don't know if there is global warming or global cooling. I hear there is global warming and then I hear there is global cooling. Then I see pictures and they say that we will be under water in ten years and then I talk to another geologist and they say that it means two inches. I can't tell. But what I can tell is that there seems to be stability at Fort Macon and at Oregon Inlet. I know we keep pouring money into trying to renourish these islands, the infrastructure, roads, the electrical, and sewage. While I was at the NCACC in Hickory, I had two other county commissioners say to me that they own property down there too. We built based upon the guidelines of the thousand year flood, we had to have all these permits, jumped through all of the hoops and did everything they asked us to do and they act like we have stuck our property on the end of the beach and expected it to erode out. If you look at Bald Head Island on the south end they have a three hundred foot parallel soft groin. When the COE turned on their dredge back in February they eroded out 300 feet. I am not an expert but I do know there is cause and effect. When they turned on the pump they ended up losing 300 feet of sand. We have to find a way to make it stable. The other thing about it is there is a mischaracterization. They are termed as jetties and they are not jetties. My undergraduate was at the Citadel and I do know about Folly Beach. I went down to Folly all the time and I know all those perpendicular to the shoreline are not what we are talking about. We are looking for something that will be viable. As public servants and individuals that are involved in the State's matters we have to be able to show everybody, regardless of whether they are experts or of the scientific community or anything else for that matter, that there is a level playing field. I have heard environmentalists say that there shouldn't be any development any further east than Charlotte, North Carolina. Actually, I have literally heard that it should be a mile from the beach. I am not saying whether it should or shouldn't, but what I am saying is that there must be objectivity and a level playing field or we will be disenfranchised by the general public.

Frank Iler, North Carolina Representative for Brunswick County, stated that I may be one of the guys that has to vote on this next May. This process today will take a lot of mystery out of what goes around

Raleigh. I am very impressed with the brain power that I have seen in the room that will be brought to bear on the subject. This is something that we need to look at and the interest is there. There were four mayors from Brunswick County that I thought would be here today, there are some council members that are part of the process today and I appreciate them coming. There is a lot of interest in this. The study bill passed 40-1 in the Senate and 92-21 in the House. The permitting bill, which has floated around in Raleigh for months and is in the environmental committee, passed the Senate 37-10. It has been stalled in the House for reasons that we will not go into today. Take the politics out of it and it is something that needs to be looked at. We appreciate all of the effort that will go into this. It will give me and my colleagues the guidance down the road. This will give the CRC another tool to solve some of our problems. All we are asking is to look for another tool to solve some of the things that we run into in Brunswick County and all up and down the coast of North Carolina. To do nothing, which some folks don't want to do, no dredging, no shipping channels, no Intracoastal Waterway, loss of state roads on land, loss of beach assets and access for loss of tourism and tourism dollars. In today's Wilmington paper there is an article with the word "terminal groins" and then the picture is of the 200-foot soft groin on Bald Head Island which is not a terminal groin. It also talks about trapping sand and robbing sand from downdrift. This is all misinformation. I am not a scientist, but I have been told that you can pump sand in there and not take any sand from other sources. It will just hold sand in. We need a lot of guidance and I thank everyone involved in the process.