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**Line Report: Proposed Baseline and Setback Line  
Edisto Beach  
October 6, 2017  
Revised May 3, 2018**

**Background**

South Carolina Code of Laws §48-39-280, as amended, requires the Department of Health and Environmental Control's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM or Department) to establish and periodically review the position of the two lines of beachfront jurisdiction (the baseline and the setback line) once every seven to ten years. For all oceanfront land that is developed or potentially could be developed, the average annual shoreline change rate, also known as the average long-term erosion rate, is also reviewed during this timeframe. The purpose of these jurisdictional lines is to implement §48-39-280(A), which states:

"A forty-year policy of retreat from the shoreline is established. The department must implement this policy and utilize the best available scientific and historical data in the implementation. The department must establish a baseline which parallels the shoreline for each standard erosion zone and each inlet erosion zone. Subject to Section 48-39-290(D), the baseline established pursuant to this section must not move seaward from its position on December 31, 2017."

The baseline is the more seaward of the two jurisdictional lines. Seaward of the baseline, permitted activities are limited to wooden walkways, small wooden decks, fishing piers, golf courses, normal landscaping, groins, activities authorized by emergency orders, beach renourishment projects, and structures authorized by a special permit. The setback line is the landward line of beachfront jurisdiction. Between the baseline and setback line, the Department exercises regulatory permitting authority for such activities as habitable structures and associated infrastructure, decks, gazebos, other public access structures, and sand dune management. Seaward of the setback line, construction of new shore-parallel erosion control structures (i.e. seawalls, revetments or bulkheads) is prohibited. However, existing erosion control structures may be maintained or repaired with prior authorization by the Department.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the process of delineating these jurisdictional lines, the Department has collected beach survey data statewide since 1988 at monitoring stations that are typically spaced 2,000 feet apart. Sections of the coast that are not likely to be developed, such as Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, are not surveyed. Surveys begin landward of the primary oceanfront sand dune, if one exists, and extend down the beach and offshore. In addition to this beach erosion monitoring data, the Department utilizes recent dune field topographic data such as Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), elevation measurements collected with a survey-grade GPS unit, vegetation measurements collected with a mapping-grade GPS unit, current and historical aerial photographs dating back at least 40 years that show the shoreline location, and

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<sup>1</sup> S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-290(A).

previous shoreline change analysis data or reports. These data were viewed and analyzed using ESRI's Geographic Information System (GIS) software.

### **Process for Establishing the Baseline Position**

To establish the baseline position, the shoreline must first be classified as an inlet zone or a standard zone. Areas that are close to inlets with non-parallel offshore bathymetric contours and non-parallel historical shoreline positions are classified as inlet zones, while all other areas are classified as standard zones. Inlet zone classifications are further refined as either unstabilized, or stabilized by jetties, terminal groins, or other structures.

In stabilized inlet zones and standard zones, the baseline is located at the crest of the primary oceanfront sand dune using beach survey data or dune field topographic data such as LIDAR. The primary oceanfront sand dune is defined as a dune with a minimum height of 3 feet, as measured vertically from the crest to the toe of the dune. This dune must also form a continuous line for 500 shore parallel feet.<sup>2</sup> If the shoreline has been altered naturally or artificially by the construction of erosion control devices, groins, or other man-made alterations, the baseline must be established where the crest of the primary oceanfront sand dune would be located if the shoreline had not been altered.<sup>3</sup>

To calculate a dune crest position at an armored<sup>4</sup> location, the volume of sand on the beach seaward of the erosion control structure is determined from survey data and then compared to the volume of sand from a nearby unarmored reference profile that displays a representative sand dune. The reference profile is overlaid on the armored profile in such a way that the measured sand volumes match, and then the dune crest position can be transferred from the reference profile to the armored profile. This calculated dune crest position then becomes the baseline.

In unstabilized inlet zones, the baseline is established at the most landward shoreline position at any time during the past 40 years, unless the best available scientific and historical data of the inlet and adjacent beaches indicate that the shoreline is unlikely to return to its former position. This baseline position is established by analyzing shorelines created from historical aerial photographs or shoreline data collected in the field, and identifying the most landward shoreline position.<sup>5</sup>

### **Process for Establishing the Setback Line Position**

The setback line position is dependent on the baseline position and the average annual shoreline change rate, also known as the average long-term erosion rate. The shoreline change rate is calculated using available historical shoreline data and GIS software. The setback line is established landward of the baseline a distance which is 40 times the average annual shoreline change rate or not less than 20 feet.<sup>6</sup>

During this line review, the shoreline change rate calculation was performed using AMBUR (Analyzing Moving Boundaries using R), a tool available through the R-forge statistical

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<sup>2</sup> S.C. Code Regs. 30-1(D)(43).

<sup>3</sup> S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-280(A)(1).

<sup>4</sup> S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-250(5).

<sup>5</sup> S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-280(A)(2).

<sup>6</sup> S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-280(B).

environment. Shoreline change analysis was performed every 200 feet. Once the shoreline change rates were calculated, they were analyzed and grouped using the ESRI ArcGIS spatial statistics tool called 'Grouping'. The values within each group were averaged to obtain an annual shoreline change rate. This rate was multiplied by 40 to generate the setback distance from the baseline.

## **Edisto Beach Baseline**

Edisto Beach is a barrier island situated between the South Edisto River Inlet and Jeremy Inlet in Colleton County. The northeastern portion of Edisto Beach is a State Park, which includes camping sites, while the remainder of the island has primarily single-family residential structures. An extensive groin field is present on the beach south of the State Park.

### *Southern Unstabilized Inlet Zone Adjacent to the South Edisto River Inlet*

The southern part of the shoreline, from the South Edisto River Inlet to OCRM Monument 2155, is classified as an unstabilized inlet zone. In this zone, the baseline is set at the most landward point of erosion in the past 40 years. Specifically, the baseline position is comprised of vegetation line data collected by OCRM staff in November 2016, and historical vegetation line positions from 1973, 1977, 1993, and 2006. The 1973 historical vegetation line is more than 40 years old, but was retained in the dataset because of the significant erosion rates at Edisto Beach and the relative likelihood that the shoreline could return to this former position in the future.

### *Central Standard Zone*

Northeast of OCRM Monument 2155, the shoreline is classified as a standard zone until OCRM Monument 2210. In this zone, there are no primary dunes, and the baseline follows the 2011, 2006, and 1959 historical vegetation line positions for a short distance before transitioning to the seaward edge of Palmetto Boulevard/SC-174 between OCRM Monuments 2165 and 2173. The baseline follows the seaward edge of Palmetto Boulevard/SC-174 until the beginning of Edisto Beach State Park near OCRM Monument 2200. Between OCRM Monuments 2200 and 2210, there are no primary dunes, and the baseline follows the vegetation line collected by OCRM staff in November 2016.

### *Northern Unstabilized Inlet Zone Adjacent to Jeremy Inlet*

Between OCRM Monument 2210 and the mouth of Jeremy Inlet, this portion of shoreline at the northeast end of the island adjacent to the campground is classified as an unstabilized inlet zone. In this zone, the baseline is set at the most landward point of erosion in the past 40 years. The baseline wraps the upland, just north of OCRM Monument 2210, and was established based on the vegetation line collected by OCRM staff in November 2016. Any land or water areas to the northeast between the wrapped baseline and Jeremy Inlet are considered to be located seaward of the baseline.

## Edisto Beach Setback Line

The following table identifies average annual shoreline change rates, from south to north.

Location Description	Shoreline Change Rate (ft/year) *	Multiplier	Setback Distance (ft)
Wrapping the south end of Edisto for 14,893 feet to Byrd Street	^	N/A	20
Transition north for 196 feet, then north for 1,007 feet	-0.8098	40	32
Transition north for 99 feet, then north for 5,821 feet	-1.4025	40	56
Transition north for 196 feet, then north for 765 feet to Highway 174	-1.8425	40	74
Transition north for 186 feet, then north for 413 feet (State Park)	-2.3467	40	94
Transition north for 194 feet, then north for 458 feet (State Park)	-3.1825	40	127
Transition north for 208 feet, then north for 856 feet (State Park)	-4.0398	40	162
Transition north for 201 feet, then north for 440 feet (State Park)	-4.8583	40	194

\* A negative number indicates erosion.

^ When this symbol is present, it indicates that the minimum setback is required. The shoreline change rate in these areas is between -0.5 and +31.0 ft/year.

## Final Product

Once the location of these proposed new beachfront jurisdictional lines is determined, this "line report" is prepared documenting how the new line positions were established. The proposed lines are then released for a 30-day public comment period, and a public hearing is held for public review and comment on the proposed line positions. The proposed lines are also made available for public review on the South Carolina Beachfront Jurisdiction viewer (<https://gis.dhec.sc.gov/shoreline>). Once the lines are adopted as final, the final versions can also be seen on the South Carolina Beachfront Jurisdiction viewer. The line coordinates are also made available on the DHEC web site in a format that allows them to be downloaded and imported into computer-generated plats by surveyors.

## **Addendum**

Act # 173 of 2018 known as the "Beachfront Management Reform Act" was signed into law on May 3, 2018 by Governor Henry McMaster. In accordance with the Act, the state's beachfront jurisdictional lines, administered by DHEC's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, have been established for all beachfront areas of the state as follows.

The baseline is established at the most seaward position of either the current baseline set during the 2008 through 2012 cycle; or the baseline proposed by the department on October 6, 2017.

The setback line is established at the most seaward position of either the current setback line set during the 2008 through 2012 cycle; or the setback line proposed by the department on October 6, 2017.

These jurisdictional lines will be in effect until the completion of the establishment cycle initiating on or after January 1, 2024.

Additional information including survey packets with coordinates is available through the DHEC State Beach Jurisdictional Lines web page at: [www.scdhec.gov/beachfrontlines](http://www.scdhec.gov/beachfrontlines)