

**Press Release** – Speaker Hackney will not commit to coastal elected officials on terminal groins

**July 17, 2009**

**-For Immediate Release-**

**RALEIGH** - On Wednesday (7/15/09), NC House Speaker Joe Hackney (D-Chapel Hill) told a group of over a dozen county commissioners, mayors and other local government leaders from all parts of the North Carolina coast that he will not commit to allowing Senate Bill 832 to be heard in the House. The group of coastal leaders traveled to Raleigh to meet with Hackney in order to discuss this critical legislation now stalled in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Also joining the meeting were coastal area House members Dewey Hill (D-Whiteville) and Frank Iler (R-Oak Island), each representing portions of Brunswick County, as well as Duke University professor Ken Reckhow.

The topic of the meeting, Senate Bill 832, is a bill to allow the Coastal Resources Commission to permit a terminal groin following a site-specific Environmental Impact Study if it is deemed the best response to erosion at an inlet, determined on a case by case basis. The bill passed the NC Senate by a 37-10 bi-partisan vote back in late April and has since been awaiting action in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Speaker Hackney asked how many inlets there are and how many might be seeking a terminal groin if the bill is adopted. He was advised that there are approximately 19 inlets on the NC coast and perhaps as many as 4 or 5 might be appropriate for consideration of a terminal groin. He was also advised that several of the 19 inlets already have either a terminal groin or a pair of jetties and others either do not need the help or have undertaken other means to combat erosion including massive inlet relocation projects which are not technically feasible for all inlets.

The coastal leaders told of their specific challenges at inlets and reminded the Speaker that there have been property losses and state and local costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars associated with beach erosion at NC inlets. One elected official, who is also involved with a turtle watch program, explained the damaging impact of inlet erosion on turtle habitat.

The Speaker was further reminded that few of the coastal inlets are without human-induced problems, whether it be dredging of navigation channels or even the 1930's action of creating the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, which has had a major impact on water flows in and around the islands that were created when that waterway was built.

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Speaker Hackney was told of a blue ribbon National Academy of Science study which supports the use of terminal groins, in conjunction with beach nourishment. A variation of the Senate-approved SB832, which has been developed following negotiations with NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources leaders, includes language to incorporate beach nourishment with any permitted terminal groin.

During the meeting Speaker Hackney stated that he was open-minded about the legislation but was still unwilling to state whether he would allow the bill to be heard in the House. He was reminded of his speech following his 2007 election as Speaker, “...*the citizens of North Carolina deserve no less than the power of the combination of all of our ideas and opinions, because democracy demands the opportunity for **competition among ideas**, and thrives only when what we produce has been tested and digested by survival in **free and open debate**.*”

The group of coastal leaders continues to push for the Speaker to allow the bill to be heard in the House for a vote, especially since most coastal area House members, along with 74% of the Senate which has already voted, support the idea of letting the experts on the Coastal Resources Commission make such important coastal decisions.

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For more information on the legislation and terminal groins in general,  
go to [www.SaveOurSand.com](http://www.SaveOurSand.com)