



**Line Report: Proposed Baseline and Setback Line  
Folly 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.

## **Folly Beach Baseline**

Folly Beach is a barrier island located in Charleston County between Stono Inlet and Kiawah Island to the southwest and Lighthouse Inlet and Morris Island to the northeast. Nearly all of Folly Beach's shoreline is armored with rock revetments and groins. Per S.C. Code of Laws § 48-39-290(E), "the baseline determined by the local governing body and the department is the line of erosion control devices and structures and the department retains its jurisdiction seaward of the baseline." Where erosion control devices and structures are not present, the baseline is set either at the seaward edge of the road right of way in the case of the "pocket lots" or at the vegetation line position collected by OCRM staff in October 2016 and January 2017.

### *Southern Unstabilized Inlet Zone Adjacent to Stono Inlet*

At the southwestern end of the island between Stono Inlet and OCRM Monument 2810, the shoreline is classified as an unstabilized inlet zone. Folly Beach County Park is in this area, and the baseline is set at the most landward point of erosion in the last 40 years. The 2016 vegetation line position is the most landward shoreline in this area, so the baseline follows the 2016 vegetation line position and wraps the upland near the entrance of the Folly Beach County Park. Any land or water areas to the southwest of the wrapped baseline adjacent to Stono Inlet are located seaward of the baseline.

### *Central Standard Zone*

The central portion of the island between OCRM Monument 2810 and OCRM Monument 2885 is classified as a standard zone. From just north of OCRM Monument 2810 to just south of OCRM Monument 2860, the baseline is set at its original, historical location first adopted in April 1994. The 1994 baseline position was set on the line of erosion control devices and structures, except for the "pocket lots" which were not armored at the time. From OCRM Monument 2860 to OCRM Monument 2885, the baseline follows either the original, historical location first adopted in April 1994 for armored areas or the vegetation line position collected by OCRM staff in October 2016 and January 2017 for shorelines that are not armored.

### *Northern Stabilized Inlet Zone Adjacent to Lighthouse Inlet*

At the northeastern end of the island between OCRM Monument 2885 and the end of the sandy spit at Lighthouse Inlet, the shoreline is classified as a stabilized inlet zone due to several riprap groin structures that are present. An old U.S. Coast Guard station is in this area, and the land is currently undeveloped. In this zone, no primary dunes are present and the baseline is set at the vegetation line position collected by OCRM staff in October 2016. Where the baseline wraps around the upland adjacent to Lighthouse Inlet, any land or water areas to the north of the wrapped baseline are located seaward of the baseline.

There is no setback line on Folly Beach in accordance with S.C. Code of Laws § 48-39-290(E), which states: “The provisions of this section and Section 48-39-280 do not apply to an area in which the erosion of the beaches located in its jurisdiction is attributed to a federally authorized navigation project as documented by the findings of a Section 111 Study conducted under the authority of the federal Rivers and Harbors Act of 1968, as amended by the federal Water Resources Development Act of 1986, and approved by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.” A Section 111 Study determined that most of Folly Beach’s erosion issues are a direct result of the construction of the Charleston Harbor jetties, which trap sand on the northern side on Sullivan’s Island but prevent the sand from reaching Folly Beach.

### **Folly Beach Setback Line**

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

<b>Location Description</b>	<b>Shoreline Change Rate (ft/year) *</b>
From the parking lot at Folly Beach County Park north for 2,564 feet to 9 <sup>th</sup> Street W.	-5.0452
Transition north for 192 feet, then north for 4,854 feet to the Charleston Oceanfront Villas	-3.5041
Transition north for 189 feet, then north for 2,815 feet to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street E.	-1.0793
Transition north for 277 feet, then north for 4,186 feet	^
Transition north for 195 feet, then from 9 <sup>th</sup> Street E. north for 8,496 feet	-1.5371
Transition north for 194 feet, then north for 7,037 feet to the north end of Folly	^
Transition for 185 feet, then wrapping the north end of Folly for 1,215 feet	-3.9885

\* A negative number indicates erosion.

^ When this symbol is present, it indicates a shoreline change rate 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)