



**Line Report: Proposed Baseline and Setback Line
Pritchards Island
October 6, 2017**

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.¹

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

¹ S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-290(A).

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, groins, or seawalls.

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.² 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.³

To calculate a dune crest position at an armored⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

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 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

² S.C. Code Regs. 30-1(D)(43).

³ S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-280(A)(1).

⁴ S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-250(5).

⁵ S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-280(A)(2).

⁶ S.C. Code Ann. §48-39-280(B).

annual shoreline change rate. This rate was multiplied by 40 to generate the setback distance from the baseline.

Pritchards Island Baseline

Pritchards Island is a mostly undeveloped barrier island in Beaufort County located between Little Capers Island and Pritchards Inlet to the southwest and Fripp Island and Skull Inlet to the northeast.

Southern Unstabilized Inlet Zone Adjacent to Pritchards Inlet

The southwestern shoreline adjacent to Pritchards Inlet is classified as an unstabilized inlet zone. In this zone, the baseline is set at the most landward point of erosion in the last 40 years. Specifically, 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 Pritchards Inlet, any land or water areas to the southwest of the wrapped baseline are considered to be located seaward of the baseline.

Central Standard Zone

A 1.2-mile length of shoreline in the middle of the island is classified as a standard zone. In this zone, there are no dunes because the island is highly erosional, and the baseline is set at the vegetation line collected by OCRM staff in October 2016.

Northern Unstabilized Inlet Zone Adjacent to Skull Inlet

The northeastern shoreline adjacent to Skull Inlet is classified as an unstabilized inlet zone. In this zone, the baseline is set at the most landward point of erosion in the last 40 years. Specifically, the baseline is set at the vegetation line position collected by OCRM staff in October 2016. The baseline is cut in two in this zone by a marsh and tidal creek area. The baseline follows the upland vegetation line collected in October 2016 on each side of the marsh and tidal creek area. Where the baseline wraps around the upland adjacent to Skull Inlet, any land or water areas to the northeast of the wrapped baseline are considered to be located seaward of the baseline.

Pritchards Island 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)
North for 863 feet	-11.1004	40	444
Transition north for 174 feet, then north for 2,053 feet	-10.1049	40	404
Transition north for 198 feet, then north for 3,902 feet	-9.91	40	396
Transition north for 211 feet, then North for 2,216 feet	-8.587	40	344
After 692 foot gap, north for 537 feet	-7.3284	40	293
Transition north for 168 feet, then North for 809 feet	-5.753	40	230
Transition north for 57 feet, then north for 72 feet	-8.2081	40	328

* 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.