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NEW HANOVER COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 524

WHEREAS, New Hanover County's coastal infrastructure is critical to protecting public and private interests from storms and other natural disasters and to North Carolina's tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, Coastal tourism is a major economic generator for New Hanover County, providing more than \$930 million in annual visitor spending and nearly \$730 million in state/local taxes. Tourism in New Hanover County also supports more than 6,142 jobs.

WHEREAS wide sandy beaches are a major draw that attracts and inspires people to visit New Hanover County.

WHEREAS, Wrightsville Beach, Carolina Beach and Kure Beach require routine Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation projects to maintain their engineered shoreline templates that provide essential protection to minimize damage caused by hurricanes and other storms; and

WHEREAS, projects designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Wrightsville Beach and Carolina Beach have utilized engineered inlet borrow sites for sand from Masonboro Inlet and Carolina Beach Inlet for more than 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the sand placed on the beach strands are transported, through natural coastal processes, back into the inlet borrow sites, resulting in an environmentally friendly, cost-effective project that reuses and recycles beach quality sand; and

WHEREAS, Masonboro Inlet and Carolina Beach Inlet are inside CBRA zones and the adjacent beach strands are not, resulting in a recent interpretation that advised that federal funds could not be used to support beach nourishment projects that use inlets within CBRA zones as borrow sources for beaches outside CBRA zones; and

WHEREAS, the interpretation has resulted in projects for Wrightsville Beach and Carolina Beach that would use borrow sources in the Atlantic Ocean, resulting in increased costs and the potential for more harm to the environment; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Atlantic Ocean borrow site for Wrightsville Beach is adjacent to an area of a remnant artificial reef created in the 1970s using hundreds of thousands of tires, resulting in a potentially compromised borrow site that would significantly increase costs and harm to the environment; and

WHEREAS, the offshore site used for Carolina Beach is the approved borrow site for Kure Beach, resulting in a shorter lifespan of the site if it is continued to be used to nourish both beaches; and

WHEREAS, by not utilizing the inlet borrow sites, Masonboro Inlet and Carolina Beach Inlet will continue to be infilled by sand that naturally flows to them, resulting in increased costs that would be incurred to maintain navigable inlets while also impacting the region's programmatic approach to beach and inlet dredge material management; and

WHEREAS, Congressman David Rouzer has introduced H.R. 524, which would exempt from CBRA inlet borrow sources that were used to support beach nourishment projects for at least 15 years; and

WHEREAS, Masonboro Inlet and Carolina Beach Inlet would be eligible for this exemption should H.R. 524 become law, allowing the projects to return to the successful, cost-effective model that provided healthy coastal infrastructure for decades.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors supports the passage of H.R. 524.

ADOPTED this the 29th day of March, 2023.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY


Nicole Jones, Chair

ATTEST: •


Kim Hufham, CEO New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority