

Written Statement
H. Tom Rice,
United States Representative, South Carolina Seventh Congressional District
“H. R. 3226 & 3227, To remove from the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources
System certain properties in South Carolina”
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs
United States House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
April 8, 2014

Chairman Fleming, Ranking Member Sablan, and Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for allowing me to say a few words in support of H.R. 3226 and H.R. 3227. H.R. 3226 proposes a revision to the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) map relating to Long Pond Unit SC-01 located in Horry County, South Carolina. H.R. 3227 proposes a revision to the CBRS map relating to Huntington Beach Unit SC-03 located in Georgetown County, South Carolina.

Regarding H.R. 3226, my concern is that the original CBRS map appears to be drawn in error, and this legislation seeks to rectify a discrepancy in the designation. The landward line delineating the CBRS area should rightfully be the property boundary between the Meher Spiritual Center land and that of the parcels identified in this proposed legislation.

Dr. Wayne Beam, former Director of the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program, reviewed this matter in detail. Dr. Beam concluded the boundary defined by the current map does not follow the Department of Interior guidance published in 1988. The landward boundary of the CBRS area in this instance did not follow a defined natural or cultural feature. In fact, the line splits well-defined properties. There is no difference in the land lying on either side of this particular CBRS line. The entire parcel is uplands comprised of the same soil type. Dr. Beam concluded the landward boundary of the SC-01 unit should have been placed on the property line between the Meher Spiritual Center land and the property this bill would exclude from the System. He recommends the line be corrected so as to comport with the Interior Department's guidance in order to enhance the overall integrity of the *Coastal Barrier Resources Act* (CBRA) System.

The parcels referenced in the legislation have a total acreage of 20.85 acres. A combined area of 8.8 acres is affected by the CBRA and would be removed from the System. Both parcels are undeveloped highlands with no aquatic habitat. The CBRA line runs through the middle of these parcels, which unfairly denies the owners of these properties the full use and enjoyment of their land due to the unwarranted inclusion of a portion of these parcels in the CBRA System. This legislation would address these inaccuracies by moving the CBRA line on both parcels eastward toward the property line. The property owners and the general public would benefit by

the economic activity generated from the use of this property once unencumbered by the restrictions imposed by the CBRA designation.

Now, please allow me to express my support for H.R. 3227. This legislation will correct an error in establishing the CBRS boundary line by removing certain parcels from the System in the Inlet Harbour Subdivision. The attached map produced by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service illustrates that the structures on such parcels were built before the CBRS designation. As such, there was an error in the original placement of the CBRS boundary and these parcels should not be included within the System.

Inlet Harbour Subdivision is a residential subdivision located on the southern tip of Garden City Beach in Georgetown County, South Carolina. This community was developed in the early 1970s and had significant infrastructure by 1990. The subdivision is comprised of 64 lots over approximately 40 high acres. Twenty-one of these 64 lots, or an area of approximately 13.41 acres, are affected by CBRA. Of these 13.41 acres, approximately 12.21 are classified as fastland, and 1.2 are aquatic habitat (canal waters).

Under CBRA, one of the measures defining a coastal barrier is that there must be less than one structure per five acres of land prior to its designation within the CBRS. At this time, the Inlet Harbour subdivision had already been built and developed, with more than enough homes and density to fall outside of these criteria.

Likewise, the *Coastal Barrier Reauthorization Act of 2000* states that a coastal barrier is considered developed if it has a full suite of existing infrastructure consisting of a road with reinforced roadbed, waste water disposal system, electric service, and a fresh water supply at each lot of building site in the area. It is my concern that this community does not fit the definition of a coastal barrier.

Unit SC-03 was included in the CBRS in 1990. All infrastructure in this area was in place before 1982. Power lines were placed under ground in 1973, roads were built by 1974, and a wastewater collection system was in place by 1982. Twenty homes were built by 1985. It is clear a mapping error was made when including Inlet Harbour within the designation of Unit SC-03.

The CBRA map encompassing the area known as SC-03 was designed to protect the barrier island of Huntington Beach State Park, a 2,500 acre ocean front peninsula located south of the Inlet Harbour community. This tract is leased to South Carolina so that the state can operate a campground and beach facilities for tourists. However, it is important to note that Inlet Harbour is not contiguous to Huntington Beach State Park. Inlet Harbour and Huntington Beach State Park are separated by the waters of Murrells Inlet; therefore, it is evident that these 21 properties share nothing in common with a coastal barrier.

As a result of these 21 properties being located in a CBRA zone, the property owners are denied insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As of 1990, no newly constructed homes are entitled to such policies. Additionally, existing homes, if fortunate enough to have been "grandfathered in," will lose their NFIP coverage if the home is destroyed or if it requires repairs or improvements costing more than 50 percent of the overall property's value.

In 1998, a similarly-situated subdivision, Huntington Marsh, also located in SC-03, was removed from this CBRA zone because it was developed before 1982 and it did not fit the definition or fulfill the criteria of a coastal barrier. We hope that a similar resolution can be achieved for Inlet Harbour.

I urge favorable consideration of both bills to rectify these discrepancies.