

A number of parties have asked members of the Coastal Resources Commission Science Panel to review the language in **HOUSE BILL 819 PROPOSED SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H819-CSLH-38** which is scheduled to be read in the Senate Agriculture and Natural resources Committee on June 7, 2012. Time will not allow full consultation with the entire Science Panel on this matter. For the opinions of the scientists and engineers who serve on this panel, we urge you to refer to the reports that we prepared at the request of the Coastal Resources Commission. Both reports contain the best peer-reviewed science available; and, both reports were consensus reports prepared without bias or political agenda.

We, the undersigned members of the Science Panel find the following:

The Bill declares “The General Assembly does not intend to mandate the development of sea-level rise policy or rates of sea-level rise.” Then, the Bill does exactly that. It narrowly defines the parameters within which a sea level rise rate may be established for “rule, ordinance, planning, or policy guideline.” We would like to be very clear on one point. We fully respect the right of the legislature to establish a sea level rise policy for the State of North Carolina. In fact, we fully respect the right of the legislature to decide that this is not the right time for the State of North Carolina to regulate the potential for future sea level rise.

What we find problematic in the PCS for HB-819 is the following:

1) The bill contains very specific “scientific-sounding” language that would narrowly define the way sea level rise rates would be projected into the future. The source of this methodology is unclear, but it does not come from the State’s own expert panels. The methodology has not been vetted or peer-reviewed in any transparent fashion. In our opinion, it is not scientifically valid, nor useful for understanding the changes that may challenge the economic vitality of the coastal region in the future.

2) Every major scientific organization in the United States (e.g. The National Academies, The Geological Society of America, The American Geophysical Union, and others) have issued statements that the rate of sea level rise during the next 100 years is going to be higher than that of the last 100 years. This PCS directly contradicts that overwhelming, peer-reviewed scientific consensus, and ties the hands of localities that would like to plan pro-actively for these changes.

In closing, we are friends and sons of North Carolina. Our goals have always been to preserve the coastal economy and environment, and to assist in the wise management of those resources. We fear the proposed methodology in this Bill runs counter to those goals shared by all North Carolinians.

Respectfully

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