

Patricia Gardner
202 Dataw Drive
Saint Helena Island, S.C.
29920
October 22, 2015

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton St.
Columbia, S.C. 29201

Re: Harbor Island in peril

Dear Governor Haley:

We are residents of Beaufort County and we need your help again.

Our property on Harbor Island was devastated by South Carolina's historic October storm and subsequent flooding from Hurricane Joaquin. In a recent front page story the Beaufort Gazette chronicled the devastation on Harbor Island including our home. Please see the attached copy and photos.

Our home, and 8-10 others, are in immediate danger of total destruction by the next severe storm or King Tides.

Although we installed a very expensive Wave Dissipation System (WDS) last spring which breaks the energy of the waves, it does not stop the water from penetrating the system, undermining our banks and foundation.

With severe storms and tides such as we have just experienced the water continues to eat away at our foundation and surrounding sand. The WDS was totally submerged by waves, at times, during the storm.

The only solutions allowed by the State of South Carolina are temporary ones: sand bags and truck loads of beach compatible sand.

Even a joint, multi property request for a Five Year Beach Renourishment effort through sand scraping, submitted 6 months ago, still languishes in the system.

We have just spent thousands of dollars again trucking in over 200 tons of sand and placing over 500 sandbags. This is becoming a repeated occurrence with no end in sight and one we cannot afford.

We need a permanent solution, not expensive band aids.

Our home faces Saint Helena Sound, not the ocean directly. Coffin Point across the way from us faces the Sound as well. They are allowed to use rock revetment (rip-wrap). We are not.

October 2015



2014



BEAUFORT NEWS OCTOBER 9, 2015

State allows some Harbor, Daufuskie island property owners to take emergency action against erosion



The back of Tricia and Lew Gardner's Harbor Island home Oct. 6, 2015. Most of the beach behind the home was washed away by high tides and rough waves Oct. 3. **Delaina Earley** - dearley@islandpacket.com

BY STEPHEN FASTENAU
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Some Daufuskie Island and Harbor Island homeowners in danger of losing property to erosion have received permission for a short-term fix, but longterm solutions will be more complicated.

The Department of Health and Environmental Control's Ocean and Coastal Resource Management division has issued eight emergency orders for property in Beaufort County, agency spokesman Jim Beasley said Friday. Four orders are for homes on Harbor Island. The remaining four are on Daufuskie.

Under the orders, homeowners are allowed to use sandbags and to bring in sand from elsewhere on the beach for minor renourishment. One of the Harbor Island orders only allows sandbags.

Possibilities for longterm fixes include a larger scale beach renourishment, with or without groins — man-made structures that trap sand as it drifts down the beach. Homeowners could also move their houses back on the property or relocate them to another lot, Beasley said.



Tricia and Lew Gardner stand on the boardwalk next to their home on Harbor Island on Oct. 6, 2015. The Gardners and their neighbors

Ongoing issue

Erosion at Daufuskie has long been an issue. Even before this past week, two homes had been deemed uninhabitable after the sand washed from beneath them.

experienced extreme erosion and damage to their homes due to high tides and rough waves Oct. 3.
Delaina Earley
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Property owners are proposing a large-scale beach restoration. Melrose Property Owners Association has asked DHEC and the Army Corps of Engineers for permission to pump 1.4 million cubic yards of sand from the Calibogue Sound onto 5,000 feet of Daufuskie shoreline.

That application is still under review, pending an opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Beasley said. Funding the project once a permit is granted will be the issue, said Mitch Evans, a property owner and past Melrose POA president.

A federal designation as an undeveloped coastal barrier prohibits the area from receiving federal grants from the work. Evans said his hope is that Beaufort County will be able to chip in and that increased property values on Daufuskie will increase the county's tax base.

At a September meeting between county leaders and the Daufuskie Island Council, state Sen. Tom Davis said he was working with U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford to update the federal maps designating the coastal areas.

The prospect was raised of using county accommodations tax money or a proposed capital sales tax commission to pay for the dredging. Property owner Len Pojednic said the Melrose association had already invested \$85,000 on the beach.

"We don't expect Beaufort County to solve all of our problems," he said, according to meeting minutes.

Expensive fix

Short-term or longterm, none of the erosion-control options are cheap.

Harbor Island residents Tricia and Lew Gardner shelled out \$30,000 for 150, 1-ton sandbags last year, Tricia said. Those bags were tossed around within six months, the couple said.

The Gardners then wrote Gov. Nikki Haley and Sanford, asking what could be done. The couple was directed to a wave dissipation system, the subject of a study at The Citadel.

State law restricts the use of sea walls, bulkheads and similar measures for the effect on the surrounding beach. The wave dissipation system was presented as a permeable alternative.

The wall of heavy-duty pipe works to break up waves before they reach homes and to trap sand as water recedes.

The Gardners paid \$60,000 to install the system, which several neighbors also now employ. They thought it was working well until the water level cleared the wall during historic high tides and rain this past weekend.

DHEC has not reached any conclusions about the system's effectiveness and will evaluate data at the end of the study, Beasley said.

Mike Ricci, the Gardners' neighbor, also installed the system to keep waves from crashing into his house. Ricci left his home during the storms after the footings on his pilings were exposed.

He said the system has not been in place long enough to judge its effectiveness.

"In fairness, it's too early to tell," he said. "It certainly helped me in the storm; there's no doubt about that."

The Harbor Island Owners Association board of directors discussed the possibility of restoring the beach in 2011, board member Dennis Nolan said. But association rules say its funds can only be used for association property.

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