

Dear Representative Iler:

As a long time homeowner and taxpayer on Bald Head Island, I am writing to urge you to strongly oppose Section 14.6(h) of House Bill 97, as amended by the Senate, which proposes to remove the historical New Inlet Dam, a structure that has been in place since construction in 1879 by the Army Corps of Engineers. This provision was originally included in SB 160, introduced by Senator Lee.

The Mayor of Bald Head Island, Andy Sayre, has already informed you of the likely severe adverse results of the Dam removal, including:

- major alterations to the Cape Fear River's salinity, affecting both fish habitat and the entire eco-system;
- decreased tidal flow through the Cape Fear River mouth, creating shoaling and necessitating substantially more dredging operations;
- long-term and large scale accelerated erosion and recession of the barrier island shorelines, including beaches on Bald Head Island. East Beach has a long history of stability and is one of the most beautiful beaches in North Carolina; and
- flooding due to storm surges on these depleted beaches, with rising costs associated with flood insurance elevations.

These dire predictions, prepared by the renowned coastal engineer Erik Olsen, are only a small part of the very disturbing outlook if the Dam is removed. Bald Head Island is well-respected for its environmental stewardship of the beaches, forest, marshes and harbor. Bald Head has a 30-year history of conservation of sea turtle nesting habitats, and loss of beaches would forever alter the turtles' migration. The Island also is a sanctuary to many species of migratory and colonial nesting shore birds, which breed or forage here. Salt water intrusion would adversely impact Bald Head's Maritime Forest.

Homeowners like myself, on and near East Beach, including Cape Fear Station and Middle Island, would be particularly hard-hit, likely suffering severe impacts to property values. Such reductions in property values would have a major detrimental effect on Brunswick County's tax revenue, which was approximately \$8 million in 2014, or over 8% of the total revenues generated. This fiscal support comes from property owners who makes little or no use of services such as schools, libraries, and emergency services.

Tourism is another component in the generation of these significant tax revenues, and loss of beaches would inevitably result in major lost income. An estimated 10,000 visitors visit the island each year, and approximately 40% of the homes on Bald Head are rented. Accommodation taxes in the last fiscal year were approximately \$1 million. The inevitable negative environmental and financial consequences would be devastating, not only for Bald Head but for the region.

Please do everything in your power to ensure the removal of this provision from House Bill 97 before final passage by the General Assembly. Thank you for your consideration.

Your Name  
Your NC Address