



THE FLY PAPER

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Region 2 Realtors Meeting with Hamilton in 2015: Rep. Susi Hamilton speaks with Ben Styers, Hank Adams, Sherri Pickard and Elise Rocks during legislative meetings in 2015. Hamilton has been a strong supporter of Realtor® and homeownership issues for her entire tenure.

Hamilton Appointed to Cabinet by Governor

Association weighs in on replacement . . .

RALEIGH – “Congratulations to Susi on her appointment by Governor **Roy Cooper** to lead the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources,” said President **Neal Johnson**. “Susi has been a responsive representative and we’ve appreciated how hard she has worked on behalf of the coastal region to make this a great place to live, work, and own a home.” The announcement was made by the Governor’s office on Tuesday, January 19.

“I’m excited about this opportunity,” said Representative **Susi Hamilton** by phone. “I have enjoyed working with Cape Fear Realtors® (CFR) and staff, and will continue to do so in the future.”

Hamilton began serving as a state legislator from District 18 in 2011, after winning election in 2010. She has served on numerous legislative committees, most recently Finance, Insurance, Commerce and Job Development, and Judiciary IV Vice Chair.

“We are working with the state to provide recommendations for filling Susi’s position,” said Governmental Affairs Chair **Stephen Hobbs**. “Ideally, we’d love to have a Realtor® placed in the seat.”

Beach Plan Supports Sand \$

Funding also critical for Wilmington Port . . .

RALEIGH – While most of us were singing Christmas carols and attending holiday parties, the state was busy putting the final touches on the updated Beach Inlet Management Plan (BIMP or Plan), which was released at year’s end. The BIMP was originally created in 2009 for the North Carolina General Assembly according to the NC Department of Environmental Quality website, “to preserve and enhance the value of the coastal resources of the state, through the development of a systematic management strategy for the state’s oceanfront beaches and active tidal inlet complexes.”

The [473-page report](#) contains information to help the state, and specifically legislators, with decision-making when it comes to the management and funding of coastal projects.

“While we’re just scratching the surface of the Plan, it contains a host of information that strengthens our case for dedicated state investment in beach nourishment,” said Governmental Affairs Committee Chair **Stephen Hobbs**. In 2015, CFR began the Coalition for NC Beaches in an effort to partner with others that understood that beach nourishment, or coastal storm damage reduction, is a critical economic development factor in the state. (*Continued page 3*)



*Leaders Observe Beach Nourishment at Carolina Beach: CFR hosted a regional meeting last year in March, Beaches 101, to provide leadership and lawmakers updated information about the importance of beach nourishment. Congressman **David Rouzer** and NC Senator **Michael Lee** each helped deliver the program. The sold-out event included both classroom and beach portions.*

EPA Waters Issue goes to US Supreme Court

Good news for property owners . . .

WASHINGTON, DC – The US Supreme Court has agreed to take up the dispute over which lower courts have jurisdiction to hear challenges to the Obama administration's Clean Water Rule. The Court will reconsider the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision to hear legal challenges over the rule, which is also known as Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS).

“Expansion of authority by the executive branch has been a major focus of this passing administration relating to WOTUS,” said **Shane Johnson**, governmental affairs contact for CFR. “EPA has worked for the past 8 years to dramatically broaden its authority to oversee waters in the United States. What they fail to recognize is that increased authority requires the approval of Congress. EPA has been unable to secure such approval, so instead they’ve tried to do it via executive fiat—which is unconstitutional.”

The [Clean Water Act](#) and other federal legislation uses the term “Waters of the United States” to define the scope of authority of the laws. In 2015, the EPA-Army Corps of Engineers proposed a rule that would dramatically broadening the definition of WOTUS. Currently limited to “navigable” bodies of water, the expanded version would include large mud puddles and dried creek-beds.

More than 30 states and many industry and farm groups lined up to challenge the proposed rule. NAR was a leading organization, and taking a cue from this leadership, CFR sent a Call for Action to members in 2015. Based on these efforts and a related law suit, the rule has been stayed for the time being.

The decision by the US Supreme Court to review the 6th Circuit decision is a big setback for the Obama administration as it issued a stay so the rule cannot be enforced for the time being.

“If the Supreme Court rules that the Sixth Circuit has jurisdiction, that’s good news,” said Senior Policy Representative **Russell Riggs** for the National Association of Realtors®. “The Sixth Circuit issued the current stay and recognizes the legal and economic issues concerning the EPA’s request. Hopefully, the Trump Administration will simply withdraw the rulemaking, which allow all of this to go away.”



Wilmington's Subdivision Review Board Meeting Packed: Normally a relatively low-key event, the room was filled on January 18, 2017. (Photo by Cece Nunn, Greater Wilmington Business Journal)

Differing Views Exposed in Echo Farms Discussion

Residents and developers opposed . . .

WILMINGTON – On Thursday, area homeowners packed City Hall as tensions ran high relating to the development of Echo Farms. A recent [article](#) by the Greater Wilmington Business Journal posited the question “Could the feud between developers and residents . . . have consequences for future projects?”

“This is one of the issues we’ve be wrangling with internally the past few years,” said President **Neal Johnson**. “We support responsible development in the region. Growth is a given for the area. At the same time, we work closely with homeowners and understand neighborhood concerns when something like this arises. This is why it is important for us to have positive dialogue in the community so we can, together, work through differences.”

If you have suggestion or comments, please email Shane at shane@capefear.realtor.

RPAC Goal Up by 30%

WILMINGTON – This year’s RPAC goal has been increased from \$29,720 to \$41,228 by NAR and NC Realtors®. Last year’s goal was achieved by June 1, totaling \$34,501, which was 116% of goal.

“Thankfully the Board of Directors increased the voluntary amount on the dues statement from \$25 to \$30,” said RPAC Chair **Sharon Laney**. “This increased statement contributions by about \$7,000. We’ve still got a way to go with the higher goal, so let us know if you’d like to help.” Call 910-762-1695.

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“Traditionally we think of roads and bridges as infrastructure. In North Carolina, beaches are infrastructure, and based on this Plan, they generate \$2.5 billion in direct expenditures. When the multiplier effect is considered, this equals a whopping \$6.1 billion in annual impact to the state,” said Hobbs. The Plan also noted that beach tourism supports 65,000 jobs in the state.

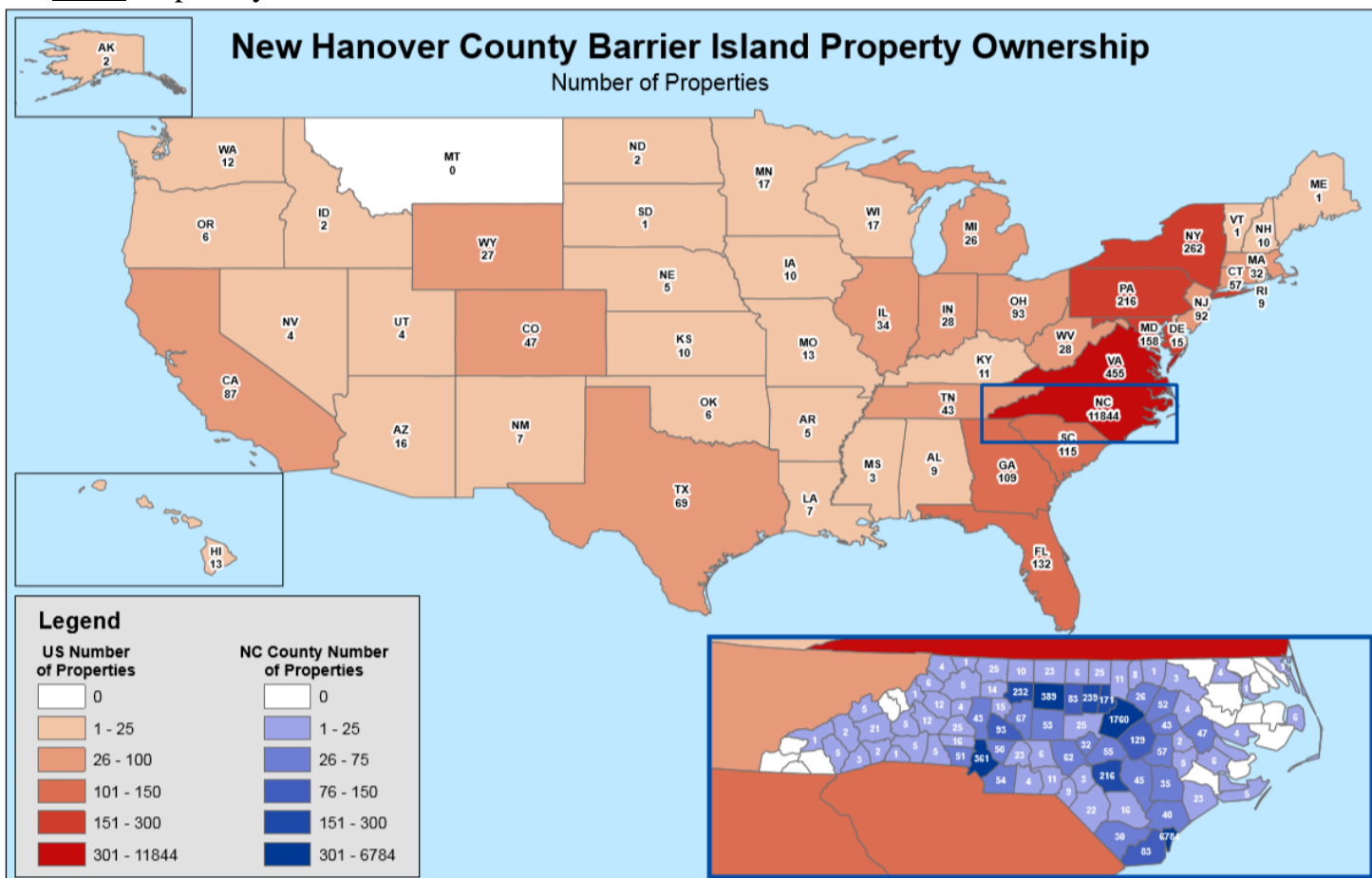
In recent years, federal funding has waned for coastal projects. The Plan notes that the annual statewide need for beach nourishment is about \$25 million based on an expected 50/50 share with local governments. The Plan provides three approaches for funding beach nourishment projects which include single source, combined sources, and reallocation of half of existing sales tax collections from short term lodging sales. The Plan also supports the funding of the deep dredging fund to the tune of \$17.5 million annually, which would provide for dredging of both Wilmington and Morehead City ports.

“Ideally, it would be great if the state could fund beach nourishment without a new tax, but we also need a dedicated source for the deep draft dredging fund, which could, hopefully, be funded without a new

levy,” said COO **Shane Johnson**. “Of the recommended dedicated beach nourishment funding options, we support a simple, fair approach. That would most likely be a single, predictable statewide source because the beaches are owned by the entire state—literally, as every county has citizens that own property along the coast,” said Johnson. “That single source approach seems fair.”

The Plan also had detailed information about property ownership on a county-by-county basis. On page 437 (*see below*) a map shows that New Hanover County property owners can be found in every state of the Union—with the exception of Montana.

“In Wake County, there are 1,760 people that own property in New Hanover County,” said Johnson. “This statistic sheds light on the importance of beach nourishment and dredging to citizens throughout NC.” During the drafting phase of the report, CFR and the **Carteret County Association of Realtors®** requested Moffatt & Nichol, the engineering group that wrote the report, include specific research metrics, and recommendations for funding, many of them that have been included. For more information or comments, email Shane at shane@capefear.relator.com.





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