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Bill

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was trying to identify what some of the starting points ... like the Johnson rocks ... and sand dunes, trying to identify what a sand dune is. And when Irma got through with us, I don't know if we had a sand dune left out there."

The catalyzing issue for H.B. 271's creation was the belief the SPA — nearly 40 years old — led to jurisdictional boundaries that amounted to a sawtooth pattern along the coast, neither effectively serving to protect the natural sand-sharing system nor properly address activity by property owners.

The idea was to place a jurisdictional line 25 feet inland from the most landward wall, series of rocks, dunes or the high-water mark. Many environmental advocates wanted a line 50-150 feet back, but the 25-foot specification went into the bill. To build or to modify property within that 25-foot zone, you would have to submit an application and go before the Shore Protection Committee.

When state Rep. Jesse Petrea, R-Savannah, pulled the bill from consideration in March, people including One Hundred Miles executive director Megan Desrosiers said the intervening months could provide the opportuni-



Bobby Haven/The Brunswick News

Congressman Buddy Carter, R-1, from left, State Sen. William Ligon, St. Simons Island, and State Reps. Jeff Jones and Don Hogan, both of St. Simons Island, answer questions at the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce Gribs and Issues breakfast at Epworth by the Sea Friday morning.

ty to properly rework the bill and produce legislation that could both pass the General Assembly and do the job intended. But there will not be movement on the bill in the coming term that begins in January.

Hogan said as he understood it, the bill was dead in the Senate and he would not support it, regardless.

"It is not going to be moving, according to the (Senate Natural Resources Committee) chairman," state Sen. William Ligon, R-St. Simons Island, said. "There's a lack of agreement — no one's happy with it, so I think it's going back to the drawing board. You may see a study committee that comes out of the Senate — probably have a joint committee with the

House — to look at that issue and see what can be done and maybe we can arrive at a consensus on some of it."

One bill that will be moving is the massive state adoption overhaul that also came to a sudden stop earlier this year. Ligon, in the Senate Judiciary Committee and close to the end of session, placed a provision in the bill that, in practice, would allow adoption agencies to refuse service to same-sex couples on religious grounds.

That amendment ended up causing some controversy within the committee and later the entire General Assembly, as a bipartisan group of state representatives rose to speak in the House against the amendment and the perception it threatened

to derail around two years of hard work to completely restructure the adoption process to better serve children and families.

Those issues appear to have been worked out. As state Rep. Jeff Jones, R-St. Simons Island, spoke about the bill, Ligon's body language remained placid.

"The adoption bill will come back this year — that's H.B. 159 — and I understand that the objections that were raised in the Senate when that bill moved over have been resolved," Jones said. "I don't have personal, absolute knowledge of that, but I understand (those) issues have been resolved, so we're moving ahead with the adoption bill."

Jones also noted the Army Corps of Engineers is working on a dredging project that would move the spoil 8 miles offshore. He said he's working on legislation that would put the sand back closer to land to bolster the sand-sharing system.

Meanwhile, above all else, Hogan reminded the crowd at the chamber event that the state legislature's top job is to agree to and pass a budget.

"The budget is the only thing we have to do in the General Assembly — to pass a budget," Hogan said. "The rest of the time we're just diddling around."

The General Assembly reconvenes Jan. 8 at 10 a.m.

U.S. Rep. Carter champions uncertain tax bill

By WES WOLFE  
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As this story sits on the newspaper page or shines out from an electronic device today, the American public has a general idea of the tax bill specifics agreed to by Republicans in Congress. That was not true Friday morning — not to the general public, and not to most members of the Senate or House of Representatives.

"Anything I tell you this morning is somewhat a little bit before the fact, because we will know this afternoon — in fact, we have a members' call this afternoon at 4:30 (in which) they will be rolling out the final product, if you will, of tax reform to us, and we'll know for certain," U.S. Rep. Buddy Carter, R-1, said to those attending the annual Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce Gribs & Issues event Friday. "Now, I'm probably 95, 96 percent sure what's going to be in it, but I don't want you to take it to the bank with you."

Carter said the mortgage interest deduction and charitable contributions were the only sacred cows as GOP House and Senate negotiators met to knock out differences between the bills passed by each chamber. Most every other deduction, tax credit, what have you, was on the table.

"The number of brackets in the House, we proposed four," Carter said. "In the Senate, they kept it at seven. The brackets themselves — we

kept ours, the top rate, at 39.6 percent; the Senate wanted to bring it down. It is my understanding that the report, the final report today will come out with a top rate of 37 percent. I am uncertain how many brackets we're going to have. I have not been able to get that verified yet, but we will see what happens there."

He said it was his understanding the corporate tax rate would be capped at 21 percent. "The president, of course, has been involved in this, has been very hands-on with this, has had a lot of involvement in what we're trying to do," Carter said. "Folks — what we're trying to do is get this country out of this anemic 1 and 1.5 percent growth rate and get up there into the 3 and 4 percent growth rate. That's what we need to do."

Projections given by the U.S. Treasury Department and by House and Senate Republicans backing the effort have come in for a significant amount of scrutiny and criticism from nonpartisan and even conservative analysts who generally appear to agree such forecasts of robust growth amounts to a fantasy.

"The report does not appear to be a projection of the economic effects of a tax bill," said tax analyst Scott Greenberg, of the conservative Tax Foundation, Monday to the New York Times on the Treasury analysis. "It appears, on the other hand, to be a thought experiment on how federal revenues would vary under

different economic effects of overall government policies. Which is, needless to say, an odd way to analyze a tax bill."

The Congressional Budget Office projects 1.9 percent annual growth, while the Joint Committee on Taxation — another nonpartisan congressional body — stated both the House and Senate versions would have little impact on economic growth and saddle the economy with at least \$1 trillion in debt.

The University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Economics released a report Dec. 8 on the Senate bill based on its budget model and reached a similar conclusion.

"By 2027, under our standard economics assumptions, (gross domestic product) is projected to be between 0.5 percent and 1.0 percent larger, relative to no tax changes," according to the report. "Debt increases between \$1.8 trillion and \$1.9 trillion, inclusive of economic growth."

Following the expected passage of the compromise tax bill, Carter said Congress will speedily address spending legislation to head off a possible government shutdown and deadlines regarding the National Flood Insurance Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program — CHIP is administered in Georgia as Peach Care.

He also said a repeal of the individual insurance mandate in the Affordable Care Act — or Obamacare — is expected in the tax bill, leading to another

health care reform push in the new year.

"That should help us jumpstart health care again," Carter said. "So, we should be taking that up again once we get the repeal of the individual mandate. I think that's going to give us a vehicle to start discussing health care again."

Carter pinned a vote on the tax bill to Monday or Tuesday, with spending bill votes before Dec. 22.

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Founder

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Their granddaughter Catherine is a member of the Class of 2020.

For years, Benefield could often be spotted in the gym's bleachers or on the soccer field sidelines, supporting her children and grandchildren along with hundreds of other Knights.

The soccer program honored her in 2008 for donating the soccer scoreboard.

The school established the Frederica Academy Benefield Society years ago to

recognize donors. The annual Benefield Society event took place Friday night.

"As we gather to honor our 2017 Benefield Society members, we will do so with a heavy heart and wonderful memories of someone who has meant so much to our school for nearly half a century," Fleming wrote in a message to Frederica Academy's families Thursday.

Benefield also dedicated much of her time to community service.

She was an organizer of the MAPLadies' Auxiliary when the group came to Brunswick. She also served as one

of the principal fundraisers for CASA Glynn and as one of the organizers of the Sea Island Skimmers, where she served as the first chairman.

"She was always polite and well-mannered, and she expected those around her to be the same," Fleming said. "She was a very good friend to many, and it didn't matter whether you lived in her neighborhood or you lived across the causeway. She looked after a lot of people."

Benefield always brought out the best in others, Fleming said.

"She made you want to do your best when you were around her," she said.

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