

To: State Committee on Environment

RE: Bill No. 5128

February 20, 2012

Testimony for the Committee on Environment proposed Bill No. 5128

We have been property owners on Cosey Beach Avenue for 26+ years. We purchased our home just prior to Hurricane Gloria in 1985. It had originally been built as a summer cottage and we had plans to renovate and winterize it as our primary, year round home. At that time we were able to secure permission to build a significant sea wall and all of the new construction on the house was done with the special attention to measures that would mitigate structural and flood damage to the house. It has been our primary residence ever since.

Tropical storm Irene was a unique and devastating event to many of our neighbors. While we suffered water damage and some exterior wind damage, our sea wall, storm shutters and construction saved our house from the major damage that so many of our neighbors, including those immediately next to us on both sides, incurred. Had we not been permitted 26 years ago to construct our home as it is, we too would have lost our first floor and perhaps more during Irene.

While we respect and understand the efforts to protect and maintain our shoreline and its environment, this bill will create an additional hardship for property owners on the shoreline. As a theoretical matter it certainly makes sense but as a practical matter it will create an enormous financial burden to those of us who make this area our home. If our neighbors are denied the right to rebuild, it will significantly impact the value of our property and that of the entire neighborhood.

It seems to us that an approach to protect the environment and those of us who make our homes here would be to reclaim the beaches where erosion has occurred so as to create a natural barrier and to rebuild the jetties that have been destroyed over time to help deter further erosion.

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