

From: Jamie Collier

Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 3:25 PM

To: zSMP

Subject: Wider feeder bluff buffer requirements result in economic loss to many current bluff residents

Section 6.3.3.a Safety Buffer requirements change the current 75' buffer to 100' (feeder bluff – other) or to 150' (feeder bluff – exceptional), which the Administrator can only expand if erosion exceeds 1 foot per year, but not reduce if erosion is negligible over the past 75 years. This expanded buffer places many existing residences within the safety buffer and severely restricts and changes or improvements for the foreseeable future.

These requirements do not allow for any exceptions based on reports by licensed Engineering Geologists, except for Section 6.4 Shoreline Buffer averaging which would reduce the buffer requirements only to 112.5 feet in the case of feeder bluff – exceptional, and require the home-owner to incur additional costs to maintain or partial recover the use of current economic assets.

Section 5.13 Existing Structures, paragraphs 7 and 8 limits expansion of existing structures to up to 25% one-time increase (forever?) in the footprint, but include the conflicting reference “No waterward enlargement **or expansion beyond the existing structure’s foundation walls will occur**” which appears to restrict any habitable footprint expansion beyond foundationless porch decks. Single-family residences on the Strait can be long-term family legacies or opportunities for retiring elders to sell their smaller residence to buyers who wish to create residences commensurate with the seaside location. To presume that future owners will not evaluate the risk of their investment in an expanded residence appears to be over-reaching.

The November 2014 draft of the Shoreline Master Plan advocates use of “best science” but does not allow for future scientific or professional knowledge to change current conclusions. It would be better to retain the current buffer areas and simply require expert opinion in the case where the bluff has eroded within 75 feet of the structure in question.

The Shoreline Master Plan already restricts all armoring of the feeder bluffs area, hence any additional private investment is at its own risk, without incurring public costs. If the laws assigning responsibility for shoreline pollution (from falling residences and septic systems) are not sufficient to assess the cost of clean-up to the property that caused it, then those laws should be strengthened, rather than create a “safe harbor” based on an arbitrary number.

Respectfully submitted,

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