

## **Findings of the South Carolina Shoreline Change Advisory Committee**

Twenty years ago, a “Blue Ribbon Committee on Beachfront Management” was convened by the former South Carolina Coastal Council (now the SC Dept. of Health and Env. Control’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, or DHEC-OCRM) to address what was considered a “crisis” situation involving the State’s beaches. Recognizing threats of chronic erosion, gradual sea level rise, increased shoreline development, and a lack of comprehensive beachfront planning and management, the panel developed recommendations that provided guidance to state regulators and legislators in developing state beach management policies. Most of their recommendations were adopted into law through SC’s 1988 “Beachfront Management Act.” Over the past two decades, this Act and associated regulations have significantly limited development and hard stabilization of the beachfront in many areas. However, many of the issues addressed by the 1987 Blue Ribbon Committee remain critical today, as the State faces a growing challenge in balancing the protection of economic and environmental resources along our shorelines.

In 2007, DHEC-OCRM launched a Shoreline Change Initiative to organize existing data collections, identify research priorities, and formulate policy options to guide the management of South Carolina’s estuarine and beachfront shorelines. As part of this effort, the agency established an external advisory panel made up of 23 scientists, engineers, agency researchers, municipal officials, and various stakeholders to discuss the past two decades of experiences under the SC Beachfront Management Act and to identify potential research and policy needs related to beachfront and estuarine shoreline management in the coming decades. In April 2010, the Shoreline Change Advisory Committee (SCAC) released its final report, which contains 13 general recommendations and numerous sub-recommendations for consideration by public officials and decision-makers.

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### **Speaker Biography:**

Braxton Davis is the Director of Policy and Planning for South Carolina’s Coastal Zone Management Program, where he leads long-term state research, planning, and policy initiatives focused on beachfront and estuarine shoreline management, ocean resources, and coastal trends analysis. As a delegate for the state of South Carolina, he presently serves as vice chair of the Coastal States Organization and is representing state perspectives on a National Academy of Sciences panel on climate change adaptation. Dr. Davis earned a B.A. degree in environmental sciences from the University of Virginia, a M.S. degree in biological sciences from Florida International University, and a Ph.D. in marine affairs from the University of Rhode Island.