

# COASTAL OBSERVER

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50 cents

## Goldfinch tells Congress region needs oil industry jobs

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

Offshore oil and gas would be a "golden egg" to coastal residents who have not benefited from the tourism economy, state Sen. Stephen Goldfinch told a congressional committee this week. But the oil industry must coexist with tourism in order to win support in the state, he said.

Goldfinch was among the four speakers Wednesday at a hearing of the Energy and Minerals Subcommittee of the House Committee on Natural Resources. The purpose was to receive comments on a draft bill that outlines how revenue from oil and gas leases would be shared with the states and that would streamline

the process of lease approval.

"The importance of enacting revenue sharing for coastal states supporting offshore development off their coast cannot be understated. If oil and gas is to come to South Carolina, I cannot imagine one of my constituents demanding the state decline much needed revenues for roads, schools and health care," Goldfinch told the subcommittee.

In written testimony, the Murrells Inlet Republican estimated the state's share of the oil and gas leases will be worth "over \$3.7 billion" over 20 years.

Most of Goldfinch's testimony focused on the economic impact to residents. He countered arguments made before the committee in July

by Peg Howell, a North Litchfield resident who is a leader of Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic (SODA), that oil industry jobs will go to skilled workers brought in from out of state. The industry could bring 35,000 jobs to the state by 2035, he said. "Environmental activists proclaim this number to be heavily inflated," Goldfinch said. "Their argument assumes that offshore operations require an extremely skilled labor force that will certainly travel from other parts of the world."

Goldfinch cited federal labor statistics that show job growth accompanied oil drilling in Pennsylvania and South Dakota from businesses that support the drilling.

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U.S. House

State Sen. Stephen Goldfinch testifies Wednesday.

### TREE ORDINANCE

## Apartment developer faults county and engineer for cutting

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

An error by Georgetown County led to the cutting of 70 trees that were supposed to be protected as part of a buffer at a Murrells Inlet apartment complex, according to a partner in the project. The company is ready to go to court if the county tries to enforce a \$13,500 fine by withholding certificates of occupancy, said Paul Aiesi, a partner in Graycliff Capital of Greenville.

The county planning office determined that 71 of 83 trees along Wesley Road were cut earlier this year at the Waterleaf project where 240 apartments are being built on 41 acres. In May, the county charged Graycliff \$13,500 "tree removal fee" based on 27 trees at \$500, the maximum fine in the tree ordinance. It gave the company credit for 44 trees that will be replanted as part of a buffer.

"This is what makes me absolutely irate," Aiesi said. "We stepped in and agreed to use our money to deal with the mistake that the county made." He estimated the cost of the buffer between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

"There was meeting after meeting after meeting discussing which trees would be saved," said Boyd Johnson, the county planning director. "There's no way they didn't know what was to be saved."

The mistake that the county made, Aiesi said, was in  
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Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

### Dining out with friends



Mike Smith brought his pet opossum, Crosby, to the annual Chillympics in Murrells Inlet on Sunday. It is a benefit for the local Surfrider Chapter. Not to be outdone, Jessica Barrett attended the cookoff with her marmoset, Pipsqueak. It also drew attention from the crowd.

### BEACHES

## New lines expand state jurisdiction along coast

BY CHARLES SWENSON  
COASTAL OBSERVER

State lawmakers are seeking a delay in implementing changes that will place over 120 homes on Pawleys Island within the jurisdiction of state coastal regulations. Those include homes that aren't on the beachfront.

"We were the most impacted community on the coast," Mayor Bill Otis said.

State Sen. Stephen Goldfinch and state Rep. Lee Hewitt asked the leaders of the Senate and House to require the Department of Health and Environmental Control to allow more time for

public comment. The new jurisdictional lines were released on Oct. 6. Property owners have until Nov. 6 to comment. The lines will take effect by Dec. 31.

"It's all about notice," Hewitt said. Property owners "ought to be given notice that this can affect some of their rights."

At issue are two lines: the "baseline" that marks the crest of the primary dune and the "set-back line" that estimates the extent of erosion over 40 years. The state Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, a division of DHEC, has jurisdiction over the area between the lines  
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## Pawleys beach erosion from Irma topped two previous hurricanes

Hurricane Irma last month swept as much sand off the beach on Pawleys Island as the two storms in the previous two years that came even closer to the island, according to an engineer's report.

The island lost 180,000 cubic yards of sand to erosion during Irma, a study by Coastal Science and Engineering shows, "which blows away what we lost in previous storms," Town Administrator Ryan Fabbri said. "I thought it was a mistake, but they assured me it was not."

The island lost 100,000 cubic yards of sand in Hurricane Joaquin and 80,000 cubic yards in Hurricane Matthew, according to the town's engineers. The town scraped sand from the beach to rebuild dunes after those storms. It is now pushing up more sand to rebuild the dunes after Irma. That work should be completed



Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

### Scraping on Pawleys Island.

next week at an estimated cost of \$200,000.

"The optics weren't as bad" because there was less damage to structures, Fabbri said. But the sand loss was greater than that on Charleston County beaches also surveyed by Coastal Science. "They believe most of that sand is sitting under the water," he said.

- CHARLES SWENSON

### GARDEN CITY | Annexation

## County officials address resident complaints

BY NIKKI BEST  
COASTAL OBSERVER

The possible annexation of the unincorporated Garden City Beach area of Georgetown County to Horry County was considered to be the hot topic of discussion at the community association's semiannual public meeting. But other matters on the agenda became frontrunners as the meeting progressed.

"Georgetown County treats this region on South Waccamaw Drive worse than a redheaded stepchild," said Ed Jenkins, a property owner on Garden City Beach. "I've seen Horry County do plenty and we just get neglected." Another property owner said Garden City Beach was being left behind Pawleys Island and Litchfield when it comes to attention from the county. Matters of drainage, dunes and beach renourishment, and safety took precedence that night.

Garden City, like Murrells Inlet, lies in both Horry and Georgetown counties. Because of its proximity to Horry County, and the geography of the spit, residents feel their needs are overlooked by Georgetown



M.P. Swenson/Coastal Observer

### A pipe carries offshore sand down the beach as part of a renourishment project.

County. The meeting seemed to act as a catalyst for unhappy Garden City residents to have their complaints heard by the county government. "They're here for that reason," Drew Streett, president of the Garden City Beach Community Association, said. "To address your concerns."

The Garden City Beach Com-

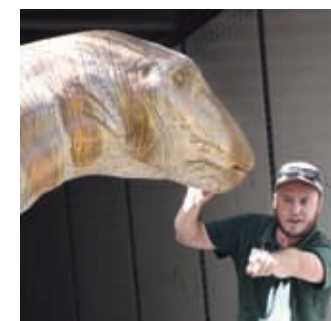
munity Association has been around since 1982. It has about 300 members and a board that meets monthly to discuss issues.

"Well, why doesn't Georgetown County get up and say something," Jenkins said.

A lack of communication between the residents and the government has been a two-way

street according to County Administrator Sel Hemingway. "I can tell you from the county's perspective, we have gotten calls from a small number of people over the years, since I've been involved in the county, involving issues up here," he said. "And certainly I don't think to elevate  
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