



NORTH CAROLINA  
Environmental Quality

JOSH STEIN  
Governor

D. REID WILSON  
Secretary

TANCRED MILLER  
Director

CRAC-25-01

February 12, 2025

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Coastal Resources Advisory Council  
**FROM:** Jonathan Howell  
**SUBJECT:** Proposed Rule Amendments – 15A NCAC 7H .0314

In 2021, DCM was approached by NC Sea Grant about the installation of temporary, pre-storm deployed instrument towers on behalf of a researcher from the University of Florida. As proposed, the instrument tower(s) were to be installed 2-3 days prior to a hurricane landfall to monitor wind speed, storm surge, wave heights along with other parameters during the storm event. The towers were to be located on the dry sand beach adjacent to public accessways, between the high tide line and the first line of stable, natural vegetation and were to be removed as soon as feasible post-storm. These towers are 10 meter (33 foot) structures, anchored by four 8” diameter, 6 meter (19 feet) deep helical anchors, and are designed to withstand extreme conditions.

It was determined that while the proposed structures do not meet the traditional use standards for development in the Ocean Erodible Area of Environmental Concern, the sentinels would be considered auxiliary structures and a general permit for temporary structures could be applied since they were not permanent structures, and would only remain in place a few days. It was also determined that notice should be sent to the sites’ adjacent property owners to inform them of the proposed project. The general permit for temporary structures is valid for one year and it was determined that subsequent general permits could be issued for the project after the first year.

To date, one general permit was issued for the Sentinel project in 2022. Eight sites were proposed, but objections from an adjacent property owner in Emerald Isle resulted in the elimination of that site. The seven remaining approved sites ranged from Fort Macon in Carteret County south to Ocean Isle Beach in Brunswick County. No towers were deployed during the year the permit was active.

At the November 2024 CRC meeting, staff presented to the CRAC existing rule language that required the DCM to deny a permit for a sentinel under the minor permit process. Most specifically, 15A NCAC 7H .0309(a) required all development be located landward of the First Line of Stable Natural Vegetation. As a result, staff was asked to draft rule language that allowed weather monitoring devices be allowed waterward of the FLSNV and rule language removing



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Coastal Management  
Morehead City Office | 400 Commerce Avenue | Morehead City, North Carolina 28557  
252.515.5400

the requirement to notify the adjacent property owners, instead requiring notification to the landowner immediately landward of the proposed structure. Furthermore, staff was asked to define “research purposes” as part of the proposed rule language.

At the February CRC meeting, staff will provide rule language to satisfy the request of the CRAC for discussion. I look forward to providing this updated rule language for discussion.



1 **15A NCAC 07H .0314 USE STANDARDS FOR TEMPORARY WEATHER MONITORING STATIONS**

2 (a) Temporary weather monitoring stations used for research purposes shall be permitted waterward of the vegetation,  
3 measurement line, or pre-project vegetation line, whichever is applicable, and shall not be subject to the notice  
4 requirements of 15A NCAC 7J .0204(b)(5)(B), as long as all of the following conditions are met;

- 5 (1) Installation shall not alter or remove any portion of a primary or frontal dune that would compromise  
6 the integrity of the dune as a protective landform, or destroy the dune vegetation;
- 7 (2) Temporary weather monitoring stations shall be removed no more than 7 days after installation;
- 8 (3) The landowner immediately landward of the proposed installation site shall be given actual notice  
9 of the applicants application for a CAMA minor development permit. Actual notice can be given by  
10 showing delivery of a certified letter or informing the adjoining property owner in person and  
11 obtaining a signed adjacent property owner notification form.

12  
13  
14 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107(b)*