

NC S.L. 2024-53

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a law in October 2024 (NC S.L. 2024-53) that changed Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) permitting requirements for docks, piers and walkways. Under this new law the replacement of fixed docks, floating docks, fixed piers, floating piers, or walkways damaged or destroyed by natural elements, fire, or normal deterioration is now considered repair and a CAMA permit is not required to restore them to their pre-damage condition. Prior to this law change a CAMA permit was required to replace a structure that was damaged or deteriorated more than 50%.

A CAMA permit is now **NOT REQUIRED** to replace a dock, pier or walkway **UNLESS** it is:

1. More than 6' wide
2. More than 800 square feet of platform area
3. Adjacent to a federal navigation channel
4. Being enlarged by more than 5' or 5%, whichever is less

If none of these four conditions exist the dock, pier and walkway may be replaced without a CAMA permit or notification to CAMA staff, and no CAMA rules apply. The pier or dock may be replaced regardless of how much of the original structure remains and how long ago the damage occurred. Property owners can determine for themselves whether their replacement is exempt under the criteria above; CAMA staff cannot require property owners to notify us prior to starting work.

The new law means that CAMA staff no longer have the legal authority, through permit review, to ensure that replacement of docks, piers and walkways are in compliance with their original permits, that adjacent riparian property owners are notified so that riparian corridors can be protected, or to prevent blockage of traditional (non-federal) navigation channels adjacent to a replacement dock or pier.

While this change in statute may now make the replacement of qualifying docks and piers exempt from CAMA, replacements are still required to comply with other applicable state, federal and local laws and regulations. CAMA standards that will continue to apply to non-exempt dock and pier replacements include:

- Adjacent property owner notification, 15A NCAC 7H .1202(b)
- ¼ width limit, 15A NCAC 7H .0208(b)(6)(G)(ii)
- Pier head lines, 15A NCAC 7H .0208(b)(6)(G)(iii)
- 15' riparian setbacks, 15A NCAC 7H .0208(b)(6)(I)
- And other standards contained within the Coastal Resources Commission's administrative rules.

ACCESS USACE FEDERAL GIS DATA

To assist in identifying whether a property is adjacent to a federal navigation channel, please access the USACE Federal GIS data [here](#).