

## **Push to allow seawalls swells in the Senate**

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State senators who represent coastal counties are trying again to loosen the ban on seawalls.

Senate Bill 832, which a slew of scientists, environmental groups and the state environmental agency opposes, would allow seawalls along the shoreline with the OK of the Coastal Resources Commission.

Some towns and homeowners want the walls, called "terminal groins," near inlets to prevent erosion.

The Senate tried two years ago to pass a similar law, but the House did not take up the issue. Sen. Julia Boseman, a Democrat from New Hanover, said the bill had support from Democratic and Republican senators, including Senate leader Marc Basnight, a Democrat from Manteo.

The Senate committee on the environment discussed the measure Tuesday but did not vote.

Shifting inlets result in the loss of property and public beaches, said Ocean Isle Mayor Debbie Smith. The structures would not cause downstream erosion, she said.

Robert Young, director for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University, said that trapping sand in one area "will cause erosion elsewhere" and put other property at risk.

Forty-three scientists from North Carolina and other states signed a letter opposing the bill. But some senators said they wanted to try something other than pouring new sand on beaches to preserve them.

"This bill says, 'Let's try something different. Let's see if something different will work.'" said Sen. Harry Brown, an Onslow County Republican.