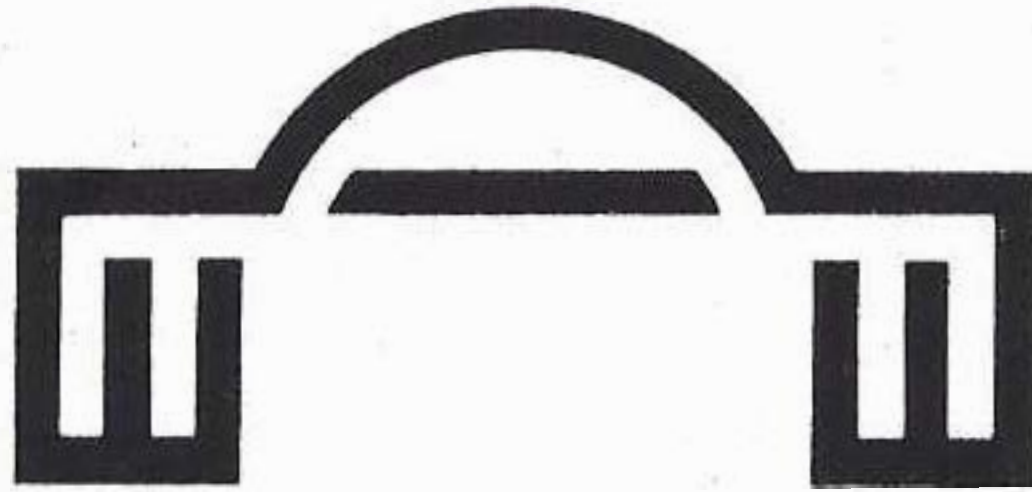




NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.

NEWS RELEASE

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COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT ACT WORKS WELL, SAYS CENTER

The Coastal Area Management Act has accomplished many of the goals it was designed to address, says The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. In the lead article of the latest issue of the Center's magazine, N.C. Insight, authors Bill Finger and Barry Jacobs detail six conclusions about the impact of the coastal legislation in its eight-year history.

Finger and Jacobs found that:

-- The Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) affects only 20 of N.C.'s 100 counties. The CAMA permit system, designed to regulate development in protected areas, affects only three percent of the land within those 20 counties.

-- CAMA has fostered a major effort in land-use planning. Before the legislation passed, only four counties and seven municipalities in the 20-county area had land-use plans. Now all 20 coastal counties and 48 municipalities have state-approved land-use plans.

-- CAMA has not been overly restrictive in prohibiting development. From mid-1980 to the end of 1981, more than 97 percent of all permit requests were approved.

-- The CAMA permit coordination and review process streamlines the procedure for developing property on the coast. Under the legislation, five separate permits have been consolidated into one form. The Office of Coastal Management coordinates the review process for other required state development permits.

-- CAMA has brought \$5.6 million in federal funds to North Carolina, funds which have helped coastal counties begin planning departments.

-- Because CAMA is a federally-approved coastal management plan, the state can monitor all federal actions affecting coastal areas for consistency with CAMA land-use plans. Without CAMA, the proposed federal oil leases on the outer continental shelf could have gone through over the state's objections.

The Coastal Area Management Act was passed by the N.C. General Assembly in 1974 at the urging of then-Governor James E. Holshouser, Jr. The act has been under attack recently by legislators who say that it is too restrictive and inhibits coastal development. Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr. has expressed support for retention of the legislation.

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"While we made no formal recommendations to the legislature in this article," said Bill Finger, co-author and editor of N.C. Insight, "we found that CAMA has accomplished a great deal for the state of North Carolina in managing growth in the coastal counties."

In addition to the findings named above, the article details how the state implements CAMA and identifies the two philosophical issues at the heart of the current CAMA debate: restricting uses of private land for the greater public good and balancing the value of large economic development against protections of a fragile ecological system.

"Our findings should provide the legislators and the general public with a better understanding of what is at stake in the current CAMA debate," said Finger.

The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research is an independent nonprofit corporation formed to study state government policies and practices. It is supported by grants from the Z. Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundations in Winston-Salem. Recent reports by the Center have included studies of the effect of federal budget cuts on North Carolina and legislators who serve on executive branch boards. Copies of N.C. Insight may be obtained by writing the Center at P.O. Box 430, Raleigh, NC 27602, or by calling Bill Finger at (919) 832-2839.