

Mr Jay Sample
Advanced Coastal Technology Inc.
3335 Camp Branch Rd.
Topton North Carolina ,28781

Dear Jay,

On behalf of the five homeowners on White Sands Drive, Cape San Blas Florida, which make up the White Sands Shoreline Protection Assn. LLC, let me thank you for your efforts to address the use of sand filled containers for beach stabilization. We, along with many other property owners in our location, believe that this type of beach erosion protection, offers a more natural and functional, approach to this evergrowing problem, than does rigid coastal armoring, and therefore should be addressed in the regulations governing beach stabilization and protection.

Our Cape San Blas home was constructed in 1985, well behind the CCL, and in compliance with a building code which has been significantly improved over the years. For the next fifteen years, beach erosion rendered us extremely vulnerable to storm and high wave situations, as we lost the protection of the sand dunes. Then the hurricanes of 2002 left our house, like many others, on the pilings without sand under much of our floor. That is when six of the home owners on our street came together to collectively explore and initiate a remedy for our near disasterous situation.

We examined the available solutions, which for the most part were rigid wall systems, until we learned of the fabric sand filled containers, which appeared to allow us to return our beach to its natural state of sand dunes covered with natural vegetation, instead of a long and high wall, behind which we fill with soil and no longer enjoy a natural beach.

We unaniously selected the ProTec Tube system provided by Advanced Coastal Systems to, hopefully, re-establish our beach. While we homeowners were convinced that this was our best choice, we conducted orientations in our homes for interested persons, agencies, and organizations, in order to give and to get additional information about this system before contracting for installation. These meetings were well attended by interested local groups including, builders, realtors, county and state government employees and home owners. All were supportive of our choice for the same reasons which we favored, except those persons involved in the preservation of sea turtle habitat. This surprised us, since we were returning the beach to a more favorable habitat for turtle nesting than would a wall.

Reinforced by the opinions of the neighboring groups, we began the process of installing a ProTec Tube system on our beach, and simultaneously began the process of obtaining a permit from the State Department of Enviornmental Protection, (DEP) ,(installion began under an emergency permit issued by Gulf County under authority granted by the State). It was at this point in our project that we discovered that we were attempting to install an erosion control system of sand filled containers in compliance with a regulation which was written for a totally different system, the rigid armored systems. In the discussion of our problems with state officials we were often encouraged to install a rigid armored system (seawall), in fact, on a visit to the office of Representative Bense, we home owners were told by Senior DEP representatives, who attended at the request of Rep. Bense, “ why don’t you just put in a sea wall?, we can approve that without any problems!!”. In summary, there was little interest and no guidance for any system other than the rigid wall type.

In the spring of 2003 we completed our installation satisfactorily, and for the next two years our beach began to rebuild dunes. The natural vegetation grew, and contrary to what Fish and Wildlife reports may indicate, we did have sea turtles nest on top the buried tubes,(I have documented photos of nests). Our group of homeowners, are well satisfied with our decision to install the ProTec Tube instead of a seawall, although we remain without a state permit. I personally believe that this six foot high sand filled bag afforded the degree of protection necessary to prevent the erosion around the base of our pilings, and the subsequent collapse of our house during Hurricane Ivan.

It is our hope that by attesting to the satisfactory performance of the ProTec Tube, while recounting the events and problems occuring in the installation of this sand filled protective system, we will validate the need for this type protective system, and for regulations allowing both installation and use.

Sincerely,
James R. Pierce
289 White Sands Drive
Port St. Joe FL