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- ECR 2.0: How new rules can bring a sea change



ECR 2.0: How new rules can bring a sea change

[Yogesh Kabirdoss](#) | TNN | Jan 7, 2019, 11:00 IST

TimesPoints



Realtors said areas beyond Uthandi would benefit

due to the amendments in the CRZ notification

While driving down East Coast Road towards [Puducherry](#), have you ever noticed the highrises to your right? Those buildings, towering over OMR at a distance, could well be a reality on the scenic ECR with the Centre defreezing the [floor space index](#) (FSI) for construction in the [coastal regulation zone](#) (CRZ).

The move, that comes close on the heels of the state government increasing the FSI to 2.0 across Tamil Nadu, has brought cheer to the realty sector, but environmentalists and residents have voiced their concern. They said proliferation of mammoth concrete structures would adversely impact the coastline.

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Realtors said areas beyond Uthandi would benefit due to the amendments in the [CRZ notification](#). Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India, Chennai chapter, vice-president S Sridharan said the approval would facilitate new housing projects.

“The CRZ III for rural pockets have been categorised as A and B. Norms for CRZ III A and CRZ II are now the same. The largest beneficiary will be coastal pockets beyond Uthandi,” he said. Santhome, Foreshore Estate and MRC Nagar stand to gain, he said. CRZ II pertains to urbanised pockets.

This is not all. In category A, the no development zone (NDZ) from the high tide line (HTL) has been shrunk from 200m to 50m in areas with a population density of 2,161 per sqkm or more. This apart, temporary tourism facilities such as shacks, toilets, change rooms and drinking water facilities would be permitted within 10m from the HTL on the beaches. Areas under category B, rural areas with population density of below 2,161 per sqkm, will continue to have an NDZ of 200m from HTL.

Housing and urban development department sources said while real estate would flourish beyond Uthandi on ECR, five pockets from Kottivakkam would have an FSI of only 0.8 as they have been declared as aquifer recharge area.

Premium FSI that is not given for housing projects on ECR could be reviewed in the light of the new CRZ notification, an official said. Vice-chairman of Builders' Association of India's Southern Centre Ramaprabhu said about 540 constructions on ECR till Neelankarai that have been identified as illegal could get regularised. “They would be eligible for regularisation after the notification,” he said. However, a housing and urban development department official said regularisation under the ongoing housing scheme would be examined once the notification is publicised.

The changes though have not amused environmentalists and residents who said the ecosystem could get hit. K Saravanan of Coastal Resource Centre, who hails from Urur Kuppam fishing hamlet, said allowing building activities under the garb of improving the livelihood of fishermen by promoting tourism activities would be detrimental for the fisher folk. M Sivakumar, president of Sri Kapaleeswarar Nagar Welfare Association in Neelankarai, said increased real estate activity would impede breeding of turtles. “The coastline is known for breeding of turtles which enter up to 100m to lay eggs on the sand dunes. As the NDZ has been reduced to 50m from HTL, it will be affected,” he said.

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