1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 2 - - - - - - - - - - - - x 3 STOP THE BEACH : 4 RENOURISHMENT, INC., : 5 Petitioner : 6 : No. 08-1151 v. 7 FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF : 8 ENVIRONMENTAL : 9 PROTECTION, ET AL. : 10 - - - - - - - - - - - - x 11 Washington, D.C. Wednesday, December 2, 2009 12 13 14 The above-entitled matter came on for oral 15 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States 16 at 10:02 a.m. 17 APPEARANCES: 18 D. KENT SAFRIET, ESQ., Tallahassee, Fla.; on behalf of 19 the Petitioner. SCOTT D. MAKAR, ESO., Solicitor General, Tallahassee, 20 21 Fla.; on behalf of the Respondents. EDWIN S. KNEEDLER, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General, 22 23 Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf of 24 the United States, as amici curiae, supporting the 25 Respondents.

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1 PROCEEDINGS 2 (10:02 a.m.) CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We will hear 3 4 argument this morning in Case 08-1151, Stop the Beach 5 Renourishment v. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection. 6 7 Mr. Safriet. 8 ORAL ARGUMENT OF D. KENT SAFRIET 9 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER 10 MR. SAFRIET: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it 11 please the Court: Today we ask this Court to expressly 12 13 recognize that a State court decision, unpredictable in 14 terms of relevant precedents, which redefines 15 century-old property rights to no longer exist, violates the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution. 16 17 The Florida Supreme Court suddenly and 18 dramatically redefined property rights, converting 19 oceanfront property into oceanview property to avoid the 20 finding of a taking. It did so in the context of a 21 beach restoration project which could have been 22 accomplished without taking any private property at all. 23 Given this Court's jurisprudence that a State's 24 legislative and executive branches cannot violate the 25 Fifth Amendment, we see no reason why the judicial

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1	branch should be treated any differently.
2	JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought your basic
3	position in the litigation in Florida was that the
4	Florida legislation violated the takings protection, and
5	so it's kind of strange to switch your target from the
б	legislature, which enacted this measure, and then say,
7	because the judiciary upheld it, the judiciary somehow
8	is complicit in this violation by the legislature
9	implemented by the administrative officers.
10	MR. SAFRIET: That is correct, Your Honor.
11	Below, the case was litigated as one of a taking by the
12	legislature when it passed the act.
1 0	
13	When it passed the Beach and Shore
13 14	When it passed the Beach and Shore Preservation Act, it contained a provision within
14	Preservation Act, it contained a provision within
14 15	Preservation Act, it contained a provision within Section 161.141, which is a savings clause. It said to
14 15 16	Preservation Act, it contained a provision within Section 161.141, which is a savings clause. It said to the extent the beach restoration cannot be accomplished
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14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Preservation Act, it contained a provision within Section 161.141, which is a savings clause. It said to the extent the beach restoration cannot be accomplished without taking property rights, the requesting authorities have to use eminent domain proceedings to take those rights. At the First District Court of Appeal, they
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Preservation Act, it contained a provision within Section 161.141, which is a savings clause. It said to the extent the beach restoration cannot be accomplished without taking property rights, the requesting authorities have to use eminent domain proceedings to take those rights. At the First District Court of Appeal, they agreed with us that the littoral rights were being taken

25 whether there was a physical taking of these rights or a

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regulatory taking of these rights by the act and whether
 the savings clause would apply.

3 To everybody's shock, the Florida Supreme 4 Court said: We're going to go back to step one and 5 decide you don't have any littoral rights. The legislature didn't eliminate any protected littoral б 7 rights that you thought you once had for over a 100 8 years as the relevant precedents in common law indicate. So it was that decision of the Florida Supreme Court 9 10 that said you have -- you no longer have property, that 11 gives rise to the issue before this Court is, can the 12 Florida Supreme Court redefine those 100-year-old rights 13 to no longer exist?

JUSTICE GINSBURG: As applied in a new situation. There was never the kind of situation involved here with the beach restoration project. The -- the precedent did not involve the kind of situation that this case presents.

MR. SAFRIET: Yes, Your Honor. There is no precedent with respect to the Beach and Shore Preservation Act as it has ever been applied. We do concede that.

However, there are two fundamental principles of Florida law that have existed for more than 100 years, and those are property that must --

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1	property that borders the mean high water line must
2	remain in contact with the mean high water line to
3	possess common law littoral rights. If that connection
4	is not there there are no common law littoral rights.
5	Common law littoral rights are constitutionally
6	protected and cannot be taken without due process and
7	just compensation.
8	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, they're they're
9	eliminated at least the right of contact with the
10	water can be eliminated by an avulsion, right?
11	When there's when there's avulsion, even
12	at common law and under Florida law, it it can happen
13	that some land between the property owner and and the
14	water will be owned by the State.
15	MR. SAFRIET: That is correct, Your Honor.
16	Under the
17	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, why wasn't this an
18	avulsion?
19	MR. SAFRIET: Well, because the avulsion in
20	this case, Your Honor, was the hurricanes that the State
21	cites as the reason for the beaches being washed away,
22	and it was
23	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, well, well, well.
24	There were there were two avulsions. One was the
25	avulsion of it being washed away and the other was the

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-- the rapid replacement of sand. That -- that is not a
 natural, gradual phenomenon.

3 MR. SAFRIET: That is right, Your Honor, but 4 the -- there is no case law in Florida or no principle 5 that says avulsion can occur by artificial means. So 6 there is -- the beach restoration, where they placed it 7 on the beach, is not avulsion.

3 JUSTICE SCALIA: If there is no case law, it9 seems to me you've lost your case.

10 MR. SAFRIET: No, the case law specifically 11 says that avulsion is a result of natural occurrences, 12 by the action of the wind and the water. That's what 13 avulsion is in Florida and has been -- you know, for at 14 least 50 years, I believe. It's --

JUSTICE BREYER: They have a new situation. It's sort of like an avulsion. It's sort of like an accretion. The only precedent of -- you keep talking about 100 years -- it seemed to me some dictum in a case called Sand Key, which does say that the upland property owner has the right to touch the water.

21 So in this case, the Florida Supreme Court 22 says the purpose of that was to make certain that the 23 upland property owner could go to the water. And so 24 here we have a case that assures he can go to the water, 25 and they have a new situation, which is, as I think

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1 Justice Scalia said, looks an awful lot like an 2 avulsion, though of course there are differences. 3 So it sounds like a typical common law 4 situation. A new situation arises. You try to apply 5 old precedent and they reached the result they did. Now, what's your response to that? Because that's the 6 7 argument the other side makes. 8 MR. SAFRIET: The response to that, Your Honor, is the doctrine of avulsion -- as part of the 9 10 doctrine of avulsion is the doctrine -- or the right to 11 reclaim what was lost by the landowner. So when an 12 avulsion event occurs the landowner that has lost 13 property has a right under common law to reclaim what 14 they lost. 15 JUSTICE BREYER: You didn't lose anything. 16 It just went out the front door there. The land ended 17 here, and the new avulsion comes in and extends it 18 further. You didn't lose one inch. All you lost was 19 the right to touch the water. But the Court here says you in effect have that right because you can walk right 20 21 over it and get to the water. 22 MR. SAFRIET: What -- what was lost in this 23 case, Your Honor, is the right to contact the mean high water line, and I think there's a distinction between 24

25 the right to contact the mean high water line and the

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1 water's edge. The Florida Supreme Court didn't address 2 the former issue, contact with the mean high water line. 3 That's --4 JUSTICE BREYER: Don't you have a right to 5 walk across and put your boat in the water and swim, and nobody can stop you? б 7 MR. SAFRIET: Right. Across the foreshore, yes, Your Honor. And also, as part of the common law 8 rights of access --9 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Now you have that right. 11 They didn't take that away from you. The statute gives 12 it to you? 13 MR. SAFRIET: That's correct. We have that 14 right --15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If somebody wanted to put up a hot dog stand on this new land, would you 16 17 have the right to tell them they can't? 18 MR. SAFRIET: Absolutely not, Your Honor, 19 and that's the point I was getting --20 JUSTICE BREYER: You say absolutely not. I 21 thought there was a provision in this law that said they 22 cannot put anything on that strip which destroys your 23 right of enjoyment of the upland right. Now, if they 24 put a noisy hot dog stand that keeps you up at night, 25 doesn't that violate the statute?

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1	MR. SAFRIET: I think the statute provides
2	no permanent structures can be constructed on that new
3	property.
4	JUSTICE BREYER: It doesn't say anything
5	about your right to peaceful enjoyment?
б	MR. SAFRIET: It certainly does.
7	JUSTICE BREYER: And what does it say?
8	MR. SAFRIET: It says that the you know,
9	your regular common law uses that cannot be
10	JUSTICE BREYER: So what does the statute
11	say about your right to have peaceful enjoyment of your
12	land?
13	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, you can have quiet
14	hot dog stands during the daytime.
15	MR. SAFRIET: Yes. Yes. It's says no uses
16	of that property can be injurious to the common law
17	JUSTICE BREYER: Injurious, okay.
18	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But do you have any
19	
20	MR. SAFRIET: Of course now
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Do you have any
22	reason to suppose that that's a redefinition of property
23	that the legislature isn't free to change tomorrow?
24	MR. SAFRIET: Yes, the legislature can
25	change this definition of property. They can define

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1 property in the State of Florida as to whatever they want it to be, but if they do so and take property, they 2 3 must pay for it under the just compensation. 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, before this 5 legislation, in the seaward side of the land that belonged to the State, from the mean high water mark, a 6 7 hot dog stand could have sat in the water, correct? 8 MR. SAFRIET: If somebody wanted to put one 9 in the water, yes, Your Honor. 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And someone could have 11 stood there, a boat could have docked there, assuming 12 that it was a shallow boat. 13 You had no control over anyone placing 14 anything on the seaside submerged lands that belonged to 15 the State, outside of whatever regulations the State 16 decided it wanted to impose? 17 MR. SAFRIET: We had no exclusive right to 18 exclude them from that property. But they could not 19 unnecessarily interfere with our right to view or --20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The ECL that has been 21 created by this legislation -- you gave up any challenge 22 to it -- it was established at that mean water mark, 23 wasn't it? 24 MR. SAFRIET: Yes. The ECL in this case, as 25 the case was litigated, was assumed to be located

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1 directly on top of the mean high water line. We did not 2 abandon a challenge to the ECL. What we abandoned was 3 any challenges to where the ECL was placed in relation 4 to --5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So right now we just have to assume that it was -- that it -- it has 6 7 established the line at a point where the State owns all 8 the land seaward of the ECL, correct? 9 MR. SAFRIET: Yes, Your Honor. 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So after this project 11 finishes, that hot water -- that hot dog vendor will be 12 on stateside land, correct? 13 MR. SAFRIET: That is correct, Your Honor. 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No different than what exists today, before the legislation, which is if the 15 16 hot dog vendor wanted to sit in a foot of water, it 17 could have? 18 MR. SAFRIET: It certainly could sit in a 19 foot of water. 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Right. So none of your 21 actual use rights, pleasure rights, or anything else has 22 been changed. What you're arguing is that -- and what 23 the Florida State Supreme Court described as the contingent future possibility that the high water mark 24 25 might change and you could push that hot dog vendor back

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1 another foot or two. 2 MR. SAFRIET: That is correct, Your Honor. 3 Anybody allowed --4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Of course, such -- such 5 boats floating in the water below the mean high water mark are available with respect to all littoral 6 7 properties; isn't that right? 8 MR. SAFRIET: That is right, Your Honor. 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: But what can't happen with 10 other littoral property is that folks can't come in and 11 lay down beach blankets and occupy that sand, right, so 12 that you have open sand in front of -- in front of your 13 house? 14 MR. SAFRIET: That is correct, Your Honor. 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: And people pay a lot more 16 money for beach, beachfront homes, for that reason, 17 don't they? 18 MR. SAFRIET: Absolutely, Your Honor. The value of beachfront property is a premium. 19 20 JUSTICE SCALIA: And that's guite different 21 from having a house behind the beach at Coney Island, isn't it? 22 23 MR. SAFRIET: Absolutely, Your Honor. And 24 in this case --25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, can you -- can you

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1	explain something that's unclear to me from the briefs
2	and the records. That is, what is referred to as the
3	foreshore, was that wet all the time? I thought the
4	suggestion was that that was in effect beach, public
5	beach, that people could walk on, not swim in.
6	MR. SAFRIET: The foreshore, Your Honor, is
7	typically the land area between the mean high water line
8	and the low high water line, and depending on the tide
9	cycles of the day, some of that foreshore is dry, and
10	then at other times
11	JUSTICE GINSBURG: And the public but
12	what was the situation here? Was there a strip of dry
13	land that the public has been using?
14	MR. SAFRIET: There's the foreshore, Your
15	Honor, which is periodically dry on any given day and
16	periodically wet, the public can use that and they have
17	always been able to use that. That is State-owned land,
18	and they can use that to traverse up and down the beach.
19	But again, because it's wet every day, you don't have
20	hot dog vendors putting hot dog stands in the water.
21	You don't have people laying their blankets in the water
22	to enjoy that beach.
23	And what we're talking about here is the
24	exclusive right to use the dry sand area that stays dry
~ -	

25 all of the time in our case, which in our case was a

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1 200-foot stretch of beach before this project began, and 2 we had 200 feet of beach and we had the right to exclude 3 commercial vendors or anybody else from that property. 4 Now what we have after that, according to 5 this project, is another 80 feet to 100 feet of dry sand beach owned by the State where the landowners have no 6 7 ability to exclude commercial vendors or any other 8 obnoxious uses of that property. 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Who owns that land? I 10 mean, when it was submerged it belonged to the State. 11 And is it your position that the owners in your 12 organization, that they have title to that land that was 13 once owned by the State? 14 MR. SAFRIET: Absolutely not, Your Honor. It's our position that the State, as a matter of public 15 16 use under the takings clause can condemn that property 17 and make a public beach in front of a private one. They 18 absolutely can do that. 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: No, I mean -- I mean, 20 without condemning it, you say the title is held by the 21 private owners even though the title was held by the 22 State when the land was submerged. 23 MR. SAFRIET: No, Your Honor, I'm not saying that the landowners own that new 80-foot stretch of 24 25 beach now, as it currently exists. What we argue is we

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1 own to the erosion control line, which is the property 2 boundary that the State created in this case. And the 3 State, by operation of the act, claims title to the new 4 80-foot strip of beach. And what we're trying to obtain 5 here is the State to go through eminent domain proceedings to pay us compensation for the loss of б 7 littoral rights that they're taking by creating this 8 public strip of beach.

9 Now, the State may at the end of the day 10 say, well, we're not going to claim title to that; we're 11 going to reinstate your boundary as the mean high water 12 line -- that would be 80 feet further out -- and no 13 compensation, in that case, would be due. But --

14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It would be -- what 15 would your position be, assuming you still have title, 16 you still have the right of littoral title, contact with 17 the water, would you concede that the State has 18 different regulatory interests with respect to that new 19 strip of land versus the old strip of land? 20 It's still your property. The State can 21 regulate your property. Presumably, they regulate your 22 beach property now. Would their different -- would 23 their authority to regulate be greater with respect to

24 the new area?

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MR. SAFRIET: As the owner of the property,

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1	Your Honor? The State owned that property?
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No. You would still
3	have the title to the property; it's still your
4	property. You know, the State regulates property all
5	the time, zoning. Would their authority be broader with
6	respect to that new land than with respect to the old?
7	MR. SAFRIET: No, Your Honor, I don't think
8	so. The State already has broad authority to regulate
9	property already, and then I wouldn't see any need for
10	them to have any broader authority for that new strip of
11	beach if our members owned it.
12	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sometimes and I
13	don't actually know what the law is on this. Sometimes
14	the State builds, you know, sidewalks in front of
15	people. Maybe they do it on their own land, and they
16	say, We're putting this easement, and people can walk
17	across it. Would this be in the same category of public
18	project? They say, well, it's your land because you
19	have a right to the mean high water line, but we built
20	it so we have greater rights with respect to regulation
21	than we might have with respect to the natural beach.
22	MR. SAFRIET: No, Your Honor, I don't think
23	they would have any greater rights to that. I mean, if
24	the landowners are the fee simple title owner then the
25	State has its basic police powers to regulate as it

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1 would any other land, absent some type of easement or 2 reservation of our agreement with the landowners that 3 gives them greater rights --

4 JUSTICE SCALIA: The State gave you some 5 quid pro quo for this, which is to say this new sand is projected to last 6 years, has to be replaced regularly, б 7 because your property is being eroded, which is the 8 reason the State went into this. And what the State has given you in exchange is that if and when there is 9 10 further erosion, you will continue to own up to whatever this new line is called. 11

12 MR. SAFRIET: ECL.

13 JUSTICE SCALIA: The ECL. You will continue 14 to own up to there, despite the fact that under common law when there's more erosion, your line would recede to 15 16 the new mean high water mark. So, you know, who knows? 17 Maybe that's sufficient compensation. You know, if you 18 go in and ask for compensation the State might say, 19 we've given them, given them this property right in 20 exchange, and the difference between that and what they 21 have now is two dollars.

22 MR. SAFRIET: That may well be the case, 23 Your Honor. But again, they haven't provided us the 24 opportunity to go to that trial, that jury trial, to 25 argue that the value of this new 75-foot stretch of

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1 beach on top of the 200-foot stretch of beach provides 2 value above and beyond the taking of the --3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Let me ask you this 4 question on Florida valuation. Assume you prevail, 5 there's a cause of action for a taking. You have a beachfront area, beachfront home, in which there's a 6 7 hurricane and there's a loss of the beach and a sudden drop, so that it's now a 60-foot, a 60-foot drop. 8 The 9 State comes in and says the only way they can fix this 10 is to extend the beach and make it a larger beach on what was formerly our submerged land, and it does that 11 12 that, and it has the same rule.

13 Under your view, is the State required to 14 pay you for the loss of your right of contact to the 15 beach, your littoral right, because there's let's say 16 another 100 foot of new beach? Are they entitled to 17 offset that against the enhanced value to your property 18 by reason of the fact that they've saved it from further 19 erosion and have given you a beach where there was none 20 before?

21 MR. SAFRIET: Yes, Your Honor, they are able 22 to offset that, and the statute provides for that 23 offsetting such that in an eminent domain proceedings 24 whatever value the landowners lost as a result of losing 25 their contact with the mean high water line, that any

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benefit provided by the additional sand would be offset. JUSTICE KENNEDY: So the enhancement from the post-project benefit is a credit to the State in the takings action?

5 MR. SAFRIET: That is according to the 6 statute that was passed, Your Honor.

7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Did any of these beachfront 8 owners think this was a good deal, that the State has prevented further erosion of their land and, you know, 9 10 the price they pay for this is that they have this 11 60-foot stretch that the public can use, and that may 12 wash away in 6 years anyway, and if they're lucky the 13 State won't have enough money to put it back? Did any 14 -- I'm not sure it's a bad deal. And they're guaranteed against -- against further loss of property because they 15 16 will continue to own up to that, to that new line, even 17 if it's all covered by water.

18 MR. SAFRIET: No, Your Honor.

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JUSTICE SCALIA: Nobody, nobody thought it was a good deal? Everybody thought that they had been done out of this?

22 MR. SAFRIET: With respect to the 23 Petitioner's members, they thought it was a bad deal, 24 Your Honor.

JUSTICE SCALIA: Petitioner's members, but

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1 other people along -- along the same coast? I mean, if 2 I had a place and it's being eroded by hurricanes 3 constantly, you know, I'm not sure whether I wouldn't 4 want to have the sand replaced, even at the cost of 5 having a 60-foot stretch that the State owns. 6 MR. SAFRIET: I think that's the fundamental 7 misunderstanding in this case. The beach was not 8 eroding. It was not lapping under these houses. There 9 was 200 feet of dry beach, and the beach was accretion, meaning it grows gradually, day by day or week by week. 10 11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But what happened? There were a succession of hurricanes, I thought? 12 13 MR. SAFRIET: With the exception of 14 hurricanes. But hurricanes are again an avulsive event 15 that don't change the property boundary line. We talked 16 about the right to reclaim earlier. So this is an a 17 accreting beach, 200-foot accreting beach. These 18 property owners did not view that they were gaining 19 anything. 20 JUSTICE SCALIA: It may not change the 21 property line, but all of your property might be under 22 water, right? That wouldn't be very good. 23 MR. SAFRIET: That's a risk that the Petitioner's members were willing to take. They bought 24 25 ocean-front property.

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1	JUSTICE SCALIA: Your members were, but I	
2	was asking whether some other people might not have	
3	thought it was a pretty good deal.	
4	MR. SAFRIET: Sure. Sure, Your Honor, there	
5	are a lot of properties, probably even in this stretch,	
6	where water is lapping under the houses and the	
7	landowners will want sand and they will be willing to	
8	waive any types of property rights claims or	
9	compensation claims to get that sand. But that's not	
10	what happened in this case.	
11	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Could the State	
12	could the State sell this new land to somebody else?	
13	MR. SAFRIET: There's no reason they	
14	couldn't, because they own the fee simple title to it,	
15	as well as they could send the sovereign submerged lands	
16	in front of the property.	
17	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But it would be subject to	
18	the easement that the State acknowledges you have, which	
19	is the easement of access?	
20	MR. SAFRIET: I'm not sure it would, Your	
21	Honor. The statute provides that right of access, so	
22	basically it's not an easement per se that inheres in	
23	our title.	
24	JUSTICE KENNEDY: No, no. As I understand	
25	the supreme court's opinions, you have several special	

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and exclusive -- or exclusive, or exclusive, common law littoral rights: Right to have access, right to reasonable use of the water, right to accretion and reliction, right to the unobstructed view. They can't sell that.

6 MR. SAFRIET: But we don't have common law 7 rights any more, Your Honor, because we don't --

8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: No, no. The hypothetical is the State says that the property owner, the upland 9 10 owner, has these rights. The Chief Justice asked you, 11 could this property be sold. I think the answer would be yes, but it would be subject to the continuance of 12 13 that easement in the dominant estate. That has to be 14 the answer under the supreme court's opinion. Now, you may not agree with that. 15

MR. SAFRIET: Under the supreme court's opinion, yes, because it purports to reserve common law rights across this new stretch of State-owned beach. It's our contention that all common law rights have been lost when we lose connection to the mean high water line.

JUSTICE KENNEDY: All right. That gets to the question, if we agree with you that there is such a thing as a judicial taking, what is the standard by which we decide when the Federal courts can and must

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intervene to disagree with the State law and to characterize it as a taking when the State has said that it is not? Would we just find all sorts of adjectives -- sudden, unexpected, unfounded -- just have a string of adjectives, sort of like an adequate independent State ground rule or something?

7 MR. SAFRIET: Yes, Your Honor, that would be the test that we would suggest, as Justice Stewart noted 8 in his concurrent opinion in Hughes. And the test we 9 10 propose is that a judicial taking occurs when a State 11 court affects a sudden and dramatic change in State law, unpredictable in terms of relevant precedents, that have 12 13 no fair or substantial support in well-established 14 background principles of State law.

JUSTICE KENNEDY: Okay, I'm familiar with that opinion. Now, in this case, number one, it seems to me that in order to do that we have to become real experts in Florida law.

19 Number two, once we do that it seems to me 20 that this opinion really addresses something that's --21 that's new, and it's grounded in common law doctrines. 22 It's a close case. It might have gone either way. 23 Let's assume that. Does there have to be some finding 24 that the State decision is clearly unreasonable? I 25 mean, if it's a close case does the State win under your

### 24

1 test?

2 MR. SAFRIET: Your Honor, I think the test, 3 again the fair and substantial support, provides 4 adequate deference to the State court. And objectively 5 reviewing the precedents -- this Court doesn't have to become an expert in State law. It merely has to review б 7 those precedents to make sure that the Florida Supreme 8 Court in fact relied on background principles of law rather than creating nonexistent rules of State 9 10 substantive law.

11 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, it seems to me that, 12 reading the opinion, I can get there. There was some 13 talk about the Belvedere case as helping you. I thought 14 it did not at all. That was a very odd case where the 15 easement is wholly separated from the dominant. It's 16 the reverse. They take the main property and leave the 17 easement rather than vice versa. I just thought that 18 was irrelevant.

MR. SAFRIET: Yes, the case law, Your Honor, and the incremental changes that we are dealing with here that would be part of your test is the government or the State can gradually change these property rights or property laws so long as they leave the owner with the rights. But in this case what the Florida Supreme Court has done is said we're not just gradually changing

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1 them and leaving you with these common law --2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: The State can do an 3 accretion but not an avulsion? 4 MR. SAFRIET: Right. We're taking them. 5 What the Petitioner's members possessed, the State now 6 possesses. 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: I thought Martin was -- the 8 Martin case was pretty close, the lake that the State lowered. 9 10 MR. SAFRIET: Yes, the Martin v. Busch case. 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Right. 12 MR. SAFRIET: That case, ironically, has 13 been relied upon by the State at the Florida Supreme 14 Court level. 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Did the Florida Supreme 16 Court cite it? 17 MR. SAFRIET: Absolutely not, Your Honor. 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Isn't that weird? Why 19 didn't they cite it? 20 MR. SAFRIET: It's not weird, because in 21 1987 in the Sand Key case the Florida Supreme Court said 22 that the proposition that the State has cited that case 23 for that was not the issue there in that case. It said that case dealt with a property boundary dispute. 24 Ιt 25 didn't deal even deal with the doctrine of avulsion or

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1 reliction or accretion. 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do you think that's true? MR. SAFRIET: I'm sorry, Your Honor? 3 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: I know they said that. Do 5 you think that's true? When I read it it seemed to me to deal with reliction precisely. 6 7 MR. SAFRIET: I do think that's true, because the majority Sand Key said that it dealt with 8 9 it. 10 (Laughter.) 11 MR. SAFRIET: There are no further 12 questions, I would like to reserve my time for rebuttal. 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: A good lawyerly response. 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Safriet. 15 16 Mr. Makar. 17 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SCOTT D. MAKAR 18 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS 19 MR. MAKAR: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it 20 the Court: 21 Let me go ahead and address some issues that 22 have come up about Florida law. Number one, this idea of artificial avulsion, that was discussed earlier, the 23 Bryant v. Peppe case, which cites the Martin case, 24 25 discussing the Martin case, talks about when the State

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1 comes in on its own property and either lowers the water 2 or in this case, puts sand on the -- on the State side 3 of the property line, that that's an artificial 4 avulsion, the State retains title to it, State land, the 5 upland owner, property owner retains ownership of their land. 6 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I suppose it depends 8 on -- or maybe not how -- quickly it happens. I mean, 9 if the State project is such that they add a foot a 10 year, is that an avulsion or accretion? MR. MAKAR: Well, it would be an avulsion. 11 12 It would still be the State adding sand to its side of 13 the line. 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, is your view whenever the State does it, it's an avulsion? 15 16 MR. MAKAR: If it's not -- if it's not its 17 property, that's absolutely the case. 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why is that? I thought 19 avulsion by definition is a sudden change. 20 MR. MAKAR: No, no. Under, the -- the --21 the Bryant v. Peppe case, which was an avulsion case 22 that arose out of a hurricane, where there was land that 23 was previously submerged, it came up, it was over State 24 property, the private owners wanted to get the -- get 25 it, they asserted it was theirs in accretion, and the

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1 court said no, and it cited to Martin. There is no 2 right to having contact with the water. 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why -- you're -- we're 4 wandering off the point. Why wasn't it an avulsion? It 5 was an avulsion in that case, wasn't it, because it was 6 sudden? 7 MR. MAKAR: But it was done by the State. 8 I'm sorry, maybe I'm confusing cases. 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: Is -- is --10 MR. MAKAR: Martin --JUSTICE SCALIA: You have a case with the 11 proposition that what would otherwise be an avulsion is 12 13 an accretion if it's done by the State? 14 MR. MAKAR: Oh, no, no, no. 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Or vice versa. What would 16 otherwise be an accretion is an avulsion if done by the 17 State? 18 MR. MAKAR: No, no, no. An -- an accretion 19 would have to be a sudden, imperceptible change in the 20 property line. When the State adds to its side of the line, adds sand in this case, that's not a gradual, 21 22 imperceptible --23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: My question was what 24 if it is? 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: What if it is?

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I don't recall how
2	quickly things happened here.
3	MR. MAKAR: Oh, well no
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But if it's if
5	it's gradual, even though the State is doing it, it can
б	be an accretion right?
7	MR. MAKAR: Well, if it's gradual and
8	perceptible, the answer would be
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's a foot a year,
10	a foot a year.
11	MR. MAKAR: If the State came in and took
12	that property, yes. The 100
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, on these
14	facts
15	MR. MAKAR: On these facts
16	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: On these facts, if
17	the State's project added sand at a foot a year, the
18	landowner would win?
19	MR. MAKAR: I would disagree with that,
20	because what that is not a gradual imperceptible
21	changes water.
22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: A foot are we
23	dickering over the distance?
24	MR. MAKAR: We are, I think, because in this
25	case what happened

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, then, wherever	
2	you want to say it's an accretion, an inch, six inches.	
3	MR. MAKAR: But that's not the way it is	
4	under under Florida law, if the State comes in on its	
5	own property and adds to it, as it did in Martin, where	
6	it lowered the the water or in this case where they	
7	added the sand, it the State retains the right to it.	
8	The upland owner doesn't get it.	
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, you are	
10	JUSTICE ALITO: Why isn't it a	
11	fundamental why isn't it a fundamental change in	
12	Florida property law to extend these concepts of	
13	accretion or avulsion to things that are done by the	
14	State. If someone owns beachfront property, they	
15	accept they they understand the risk that a	
16	hurricane may cause avulsion, a hurricane may knock down	
17	their house. Does that mean the State could come in and	
18	knock down the house and say this is an artificial	
19	avulsion?	
20	MR. MAKAR: No, absolutely	
21	(Laughter.)	
22	MR. MAKAR: No, absolutely not. I mean,	
23	what the State did here is 40 years ago is	
24	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what's the difference?	
25	You're taking a concept that has to do with a risk that	

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you bear because of the -- the vagaries of -- of the
 weather and storms, and you're applying it to something
 that's done by the State.

4 MR. MAKAR: Maybe we're -- I'm -- because 5 we're talking about a label. We're talking about --6 JUSTICE ALITO: Yes, talking about a label 7 and putting the avulsion label and the accretion label 8 on something that the State does doesn't -- doesn't eliminate the fact that there's been a fundamental 9 10 change, taking a doctrine that applies to things that 11 occur as a result of nature and you've applied it to 12 things that are produced by the State.

13 MR. MAKAR: Well, there's no question under 14 Florida law that the State has the right on its 15 sovereign lands to control those lands and use those for the public trust. What the Florida legislature did 40 16 17 years ago -- keeping in mind this has been on the books 18 40 years, 200 miles of beaches have been restored over 19 those years, and no one has complained that this is a 20 taking of property. That's it's a reasoned response for 21 the Florida Supreme Court to come in and say, okay, 22 they're challenging the act. They're saying it denies 23 them two things: The right to future accretion and the 24 right to have contact with the water.

Martin v. Busch and Bryant v. Peppe say,

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look, if you don't have a right of contact with the
 water, if you have avulsion or if you have it in -- in
 Martin is a State draining project.

4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: If I can -- we're 5 arguing about the application of a doctrine to this 6 case. I would like to step back if I can and talk about 7 the doctrine through a hypothetical, if that's all 8 right.

9 The -- the -- let's say the legislature 10 passes an act saying the boundary of beachfront property 11 is now where the sand starts and not the mean high water mark but the mean high sand mark. All right. And --12 13 and then -- so that's sued. You -- you sue under that 14 and the court says, yes, of course that's a taking, our 15 precedents have always said it's the mean high water line and nothing else. 16

Florida has judicial elections, say, somebody runs for election for the Florida Supreme Court and says I'm going to change that law, I'm going to say that it is not a taking. I think people should be able to walk right up to the land. And that person is elected and the law is changed.

Now, is -- is that a judicial taking?
MR. MAKAR: I think under the scenario
you're posing that's a possibility. That's where the --

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Is it a possibility
2	or is it a clear case?
3	MR. MAKAR: Well, I think it would if
4	it if it sounds like this is the cannon beach
5	situation, where the court judicially said, okay, you
6	don't own the mean high water line, now you own up
7	only up to the vegetation line, or something along those
8	lines where it was an ouster. Here there is no ouster
9	of property
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, no, I know,
11	you're changing I understand you have a different
12	view about here. But under my hypothetical, would you
13	agree that the action of the Florida Supreme Court is a
14	taking?
15	MR. MAKAR: Yes, I would I would
16	countenance that that here we have a far different
17	situation, which we have an act of the legislature that
18	draws this line, and that the two attributes that they
19	are claiming have no basis whatsoever in background
20	principles of Florida law. There is no case they can
21	point to to say that we have a right of contact
22	JUSTICE BREYER: Well, what they say is the
23	following, this is what they say, I think: They point
24	to a case called Sand Key, and in Sand Key it says
25	littoral property rights include the following vested

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1	rights: One, the right of access to the water,
2	including the right to have the property's contact with
3	the water remain intact. That's what the Court said.
4	And in the court's opinion what it says
5	about that is it says, in this case, the Act expressly
6	protects the right of access to the water, which is the
7	sole justification for the subsidiary right of contact.
8	So what they're doing is they're reading what they said
9	in Sand Key, and they're asking why was it there in Sand
10	Key, and that's what they come up with.
11	Now, after this sentence I just read you,
12	there is no citation. So I want you to add anything you
13	would like to say why this is, that sentence I read you,
14	justifiable under Florida law.
15	MR. MAKAR: Well, you're talking about the
16	legislation.
17	JUSTICE BREYER: No
18	MR. MAKAR: I'm talking about
19	JUSTICE BREYER: I'm giving you what I took
20	was I don't want to characterize the answer. I might
21	have found it sufficient, others might not have, I don't
22	know. I'm saying they point to Sand Key, I've read you
23	what I thought was the answer. Tell me if I'm right,
24	and if I am right, that that is meant to be the answer,
25	justify it, if you can.

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1 MR. MAKAR: Sure. What they're citing to is 2 some dicta in Sand Key that had nothing to do with the 3 holding of that case, and if you try to go back and look 4 at the citations to the cases that Sand Key cites for 5 proposition of contact with the water, none of them have to do with contact with the water. б 7 Instead, the most important point is to look 8 at Martin v. Busch, which was a case where the State lowered the water in a lake, the upland owners at the 9 10 property line was determined not to have moved, they 11 didn't have any contact with the water any longer, and 12 the submerged sovereignty lands became the State's 13 property. There's no right of contact there. 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: Sand Key's statement 15 strikes one as -- as correct simply because I think 16 that's -- that's the view of the common law. I -- I 17 don't think that's unique or distinctive to Florida. Ι 18 think it would be very strange to have a principle that 19 all the -- all the littoral owner gets is a right to access the water and not the right to be on the water, 20 21 to have his property on the water. 22 I think -- I think in every State a --23 beachfront owners would be astounded to learn that that's the case. 24

So, I -- you know, I thought that Sand Key

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1 was just expressing what -- what was the common law.
2 And the notion that the only purpose of the contact with
3 the water is so that you can have access, that is -- is
4 that not silly?

5 MR. MAKAR: No. Well, two points here I would like to make. Number one, let's assume there was 6 7 an avulsive event that added sand on the State's property along the beach line, so now we have the 8 property line not changing, it's exactly where it was 9 before, but now we have, say, 75 feet of sand, new sand 10 11 seaward, over the State's property. That's the State's 12 property.

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But that's not the 14 question -- you just said that, let's assume the --15 assuming the property line doesn't change. The other 16 side is saying the property line is the mean high water 17 line, and so if you -- whoever adds sand, the State, 18 mother nature, you dumping it -- I guess you can't do 19 that, but whoever adds it, the property line is the mean 20 high water line.

21 MR. MAKAR: But -- but -- well -- but under 22 this avulsive event where there is sand added seaward, 23 the contact by the upland owner with the water no longer 24 exists, and that's been on the books in Florida --25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But that's because

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you think the property line is the ECL rather than the
 MHWL.

3 MR. MAKAR: I'm sorry, Mr. Chief Justice. 4 What I'm talking about is put the act aside and just say 5 at common law in Florida. If the sand is added through avulsive events, the upland owner has no contact with 6 7 the water any longer. They certainly have access. And 8 the Florida act is so solicitous of protecting the property rights of riparian ownership. You go through 9 the statute and you see they preserve common law 10 11 littoral -- littoral rights. They have a section --12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Would that person still be 13 considered a littoral owner? 14 MR. MAKAR: That was my second point. 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: After there has been the 16 avulsive event that separates him from the ocean by 60 17 feet of State-owned land, would he still be a -- a 18 riparian owner? I thought --19 MR. MAKAR: Absolutely, absolutely. And that's a major misnomer in this case, is that the upland 20 21 owner here, even after the beach restoration project, 22 has riparian littoral property. That's what the Florida 23 Supreme Court has held, that's what the Florida legislation says. 24

CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but it's not

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1 -- it's not the same as the property right he held 2 before, right? 3 MR. MAKAR: I -- I would disagree with that, 4 Mr. Chief Justice. 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So he can exclude people from the additional 60 feet? 6 7 MR. MAKAR: But it's not his -- it's not 8 their property. It's the State's --9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's what the case 10 is about. MR. MAKAR: Well, I -- I agree that's what 11 12 they have tried to make it about. What they've said is the State now has this swath of sand. It's a barrier to 13 14 protect against erosion. It's no wider than this 15 courtroom. 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Suppose -- suppose that a 17 city decided to have -- it wanted to attract more 18 students who were going to the beach in Florida for spring break, and so therefore it decided it was going 19 20 to create a huge beach in front of -- of privately owned 21 homes. Under the decision of the Florida Supreme Court, 22 I don't see anything that would stop the city from doing 23 that. So you could have -- you could have televised spring break beach parties in front of -- of somebody's 24 25 house. Now, in -- as a practical matter, doesn't that

1	have a real effect on the value of the property?
2	MR. MAKAR: Well, Justice Alito, in
3	response, what I say here is, keep in mind this is the
4	Beach and Shore Preservation Act. It isn't designed to
5	create some recreational playground for spring breakers.
б	It's designed
7	JUSTICE ALITO: No, I understand that, but
8	if the but the Florida Supreme Court said that there
9	isn't any right, if there is a manmade extension of the
10	beach, there is no right to exclude people from it;
11	it's the beach is owned by the State. So all of that
12	could take place, couldn't it?
13	MR. MAKAR: Well, not under the act, because
14	here's why. Under the act, what has to be done is a
15	survey. You have
16	JUSTICE SCALIA: He's not talking about the
17	act. He's just talking about your theory of the case.
18	Your theory of what the rights of beachfront owners
19	consist of would permit this to happen, if not under
20	this act, under some other act; right?
21	MR. MAKAR: Well, if there was if there
22	were some other act where the legislature passes a
23	law
24	JUSTICE SCALIA: Right. Well, it's the
25	Spring Break Act of 2010, okay?

Official - Subject to Final Review 1 (Laughter.) 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: They could do that, 3 couldn't they? 4 MR. MAKAR: Well --5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Under your theory of the case? б 7 MR. MAKAR: Well, they -- they would, but 8 the point being is that they would have to preserve the littoral rights of --9 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why do we have to say 11 that? I mean, they're writing a -- a -- an opinion here 12 against a background of an act, and as I read that 13 opinion -- you can add something to this if you want --14 I make a list of what they say in effect provides, not 15 perfectly, but provides roughly, the same kind of 16 protection that the Sand Key statement provided. 17 One, you can go to the water; two, you have 18 a right of ingress and egress, if that's any different 19 from the first. I'm not positive. Three, you have a 20 right under the act that nobody can put anything on that 21 strip which is injurious to the upland owner. All 22 right. 23 So those are at least three things and I think there's a fourth. Yes, the fourth is that nobody 24 25 can build anything there that is harmful, except if it's

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1 to do with the environment; that's not harmful, that's 2 helpful to the beach owner; it's supposed to be helpful. 3 And, five, you get your beach guaranteed. 4 So all of those things are things you get 5 under this act in an intermediate case where it's a little like an avulsion and a little not like an 6 7 avulsion. Now, do I add anything to my list? And do 8 you have to go beyond that? 9 MR. MAKAR: No, well, there's -- there's 10 even more, Justice Breyer. 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay, that's what I wanted 12 to know. What more? 13 MR. MAKAR: What the legislature in Florida 14 did as well is to say that when they do the survey, as you see in the document attached in the joint appendix, 15 16 they have to set out what the width of the berm will be, 17 the sacrificial sand that's there to erode away over 18 time. They put the width in there. And in this 19 particular instance it's about 75 feet. And it's going 20 to erode away. That cannot be increased without the 21 consent of the owners. 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So why doesn't --23 why don't you take your list and Justice Breyer's list and submit that in the just compensation hearing? 24 When 25 the landowner comes in and says, look, you have taken my

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property and it is worth \$100,000, and you come in and say oh, no, no; it's not worth \$100,000; look at all these things we saved and gave you. It's only -- what you have lost is only worth \$20,000. And a court will review that and say yes, no, whatever, and that's what you get.

7 MR. MAKAR: Well, because, Mr. Chief
8 Justice, under background principles of Florida law they
9 have no right to contact with the water, and this
10 accretion right is --

11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Again, that is what 12 the whole case is about, whether they have a right to 13 contact the water or not. It seems to me if your only 14 answer to every question is they don't have the right, 15 you're just completely begging the question.

16 MR. MAKAR: But under -- with due respect, 17 under Florida law they don't. And --

JUSTICE BREYER: Well, isn't the question here that the reason they don't under Florida law is in a situation where the law isn't clear, we draw the Florida law this way rather than that way, and that is a reasonable common law decision because of the six points that we've listed on the list?

24 MR. MAKAR: Absolutely. Given this -25 JUSTICE BREYER: It's not that it's a taking

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2	MR. MAKAR: Absolutely.
3	JUSTICE BREYER: and you're compensating.
4	It is a reason why this is a I am somewhat putting
5	words in your mouth, but I mean
6	(Laughter.)
7	MR. MAKAR: Well, certainly our position is
8	that there's no
9	JUSTICE SCALIA: You won't disagree with
10	that.
11	(Laughter.)
12	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Do you know the answer to
13	the question that was asked of your colleague? That is,
14	here we have an organization representing several
15	landowners. Is there any indication about how these
16	beachfront owners in these communities, what their view
17	is, that they are benefiting, that they are harmed? Is
18	there any indication of that?
19	MR. MAKAR: Other than these Petitioners,
20	Justice Ginsburg, no one has complained about this and
21	said that and brought an action or or otherwise.
22	This is a very beneficial program. It's basically a
23	beachfront property protection act, so it's sort of
24	anomalous that anyone would complain.
25	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But the problem with the

1	argument that I'm having is that in the last colloquy
2	with Justice Breyer we heard how reasonable this act
3	was. That's one thing. But you have taken the position
4	that it's your property and you can do with it what you
5	want anyway. Now, maybe in this case it won't make a
б	difference, because it's so reasonable that there's not
7	a taking. But what about what do you call the
8	spring fling, the spring break hypothetical, or a
9	permanent oceanography museum.
10	MR. MAKAR: Sure, Justice Kennedy. We have
11	cases in Florida, for example, where a bridge was built
12	entirely across the view of the of the river, and the
13	upland owner in that situation had a total impairment of
14	their right to view, and that's compensable. So so
15	but here what we have
16	JUSTICE GINSBURG: And this statute
17	provides
18	JUSTICE KENNEDY: So you
19	JUSTICE GINSBURG: This very statute says if
20	if what happens is a taking, then there's
21	compensation.
22	MR. MAKAR: Right.
23	JUSTICE KENNEDY: And you think there's a
24	taking as a matter of Georgia pardon me, of Florida
25	law if enjoyment of the view and access is substantially

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1 impaired? I mean, is that the test? 2 MR. MAKAR: That's the law in Florida, 3 Justice Kennedy, is if there's a substantial impairment. 4 There's cases that say that --5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So on behalf of the State you concede if any of this list -- these -- the б 7 list of good things that the land owner gets, if the legislature next year takes them away that would be a 8 9 taking? 10 MR. MAKAR: Sure, if they took away the --11 the swath of littoral rights or a substantial portion, 12 that would be highly problematic and likely be a taking. 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Do you think that either 14 all of the time or some of the time a public beach would -- that intervenes between the upland and the 15 water, would be a substantial impairment of the upland 16 17 owner's rights? 18 MR. MAKAR: No, no, no. The -- the State 19 owns the beach, and let me make this analogy. 20 JUSTICE KENNEDY: That -- that's exactly my 21 point. You say that the State owns the beach and it's 22 okay because there's a protection against unreasonable 23 use. And I'm asking whether or not a State beach with, what do you call them, port-a-johns and hot dog stands 24 25 and what-not, isn't a substantial impairment of the

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1 upland owner's use? And you say, well, the State owns
2 it --

3 MR. MAKAR: Well --4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But that takes away from 5 your earlier argument that we don't need to worry because there can be no interference with substantial б 7 enjoyment. And it seems to me that Justice Alito's 8 question has still not been answered in your argument. 9 MR. MAKAR: Well, I believe the answer is 10 that this is a facial challenge. There could be an 11 as-applied challenge. Keep in mind, the association 12 here owns no property. 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I want you to talk to me 14 about what the constitutional law ought to be in this 15 case as a general matter. We'll figure out facial and 16 -- and as-applied later. I still see that your argument 17 leaves open this question in my mind raised by the 18 concerns that Justice Alito has expressed. 19 MR. MAKAR: Well -- and the Florida Supreme 20 Court was very careful in narrowing its decision and 21 saying that the actual property owners may pursue, if 22 they feel, beyond this opinion, they may pursue an 23 as-applied claim, where they -- this has no takings record before this Court whatsoever, and that would have 24

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to be developed, keeping in mind that much --

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1	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But when they do, they're
2	going to be met by you when you're in the trial court
3	and you say the State owns the property.
4	MR. MAKAR: Well, just because the State
5	owns the property doesn't mean there can't be an
6	impairment of the of the right. This is an analogy
7	to say this is a road where if I might
8	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can complete
9	your thought.
10	MR. MAKAR: That if this were a road and the
11	traffic there's a country road and there's very
12	little traffic, and over the years the traffic built up,
13	that somehow the owner of the property along that road
14	would have a cause of action. It's just not the case.
15	Thank you very much.
16	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
17	Mr. Kneedler.
18	ORAL ARGUMENT OF EDWIN S. KNEEDLER
19	ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
20	AS AMICI CURIAE, SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENTS
21	MR. KNEEDLER: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
22	please the Court:
23	From the outset, this case has been a
24	challenge to the actions of the Florida legislature and
25	its executive branch in enacting and implementing the

1 Beach Restoration Act.

That is a conventional takings claim and that is the way I think it is most useful for this Court to approach it. Rather than seizing on particular statements in the opinion of the Florida Supreme Court and regarding the Florida Supreme Court's judicial act as itself a taking, it's best to focus on the act itself.

9 And with respect to the act itself, what --10 what has happened here is the State has exercised, not 11 just sovereign regulatory rights; it has exercised 12 critical sovereign proprietary rights.

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Kneedler, that's a clever ploy. We're talking about judicial takings and 14 you say, don't look at what the court did, look at what 15 16 the legislature did. That changes the whole ball game. 17 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, but -- but, in 18 fairness, first of all, that's how this case originated, 19 was a challenge --CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: There's no choice. 20

21 If their argument is what the court did constituted the 22 taking, they couldn't have raised that earlier --

23 MR. KNEEDLER: No. My --

24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- and say, oh, we 25 think we know that the court is going to change things.

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1	MR. KNEEDLER: My my point isn't isn't
2	so much about whether it could have been raised earlier.
3	It is that what what is what is being objected to
4	here is a is a this was not a judicial
5	declaration, for example, that somebody who has littoral
б	property can walk up to the edge of the water and can't
7	touch it. There was no abstract declaration on littoral
8	rights.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Judicial judicial
10	taking if that were the case?
11	MR. KNEEDLER: That that would be more
12	like Hughes. I'm not sure that I would analyze it as a
13	judicial taking. I think another way to come at this,
14	and this may even be suggested in in Justice Scalia's
15	dissent in the Cannon Beach case is that the the
16	usual principle that where State law is interposed in a
17	way that would would defeat a Federal constitutional
18	right, a court can look to see whether there is a fair
19	and substantial basis for it.
20	That's not really a there's no need to
21	fashion a new judicial taking doctrine when you have
22	JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why not? Because
23	because what they said is: We have a right to touch the
24	water and you've taken it. That's what they said this
25	act does.

1	MR. KNEEDLER: Right, and
2	JUSTICE BREYER: The court said: You've
3	never had that right. And it's just like a person who
4	owns 40 acres in the middle of Vermont and the State
5	wants to build a nuclear power plant, and they say, you
6	have to pay us. No, says the State. And the court of
7	the State upholds it on the ground there is an implicit
8	easement under Blackstone to take land for power plants
9	without paying for it; it's called the power plant
10	easement. Okay?
11	Now, in such a case, it would be the
12	judicial taking because their ground is not whatever
13	you normally have, but their ground is you never had
14	that property right in the first place.
15	Now, how if that ever were to happen
16	and that probably, perhaps, is not this case, but if
17	that ever were to happen, wouldn't there have to be a
18	remedy under the Constitution for it?
19	MR. KNEEDLER: And and maybe so, but
20	but, again, I think it it would be possible to to
21	review it under the general principle about whether a
22	State interpretation of State law that would defeat a
23	claim to Federal right would be without any fair or
24	substantial basis, without without saying that the
25	Supreme Court itself has committed an unconstitutional

1	act. It it could be looked at that way.
2	But if I but if I could turn to the
3	the operation of this statute, what what has happened
4	here is as this Court has recognized in numerous
5	cases, the authority of the State over its submerged
6	lands is a critical aspect of sovereignty. It is held
7	in trust for the public and for public uses, and what
8	has happened here is the State, with respect to its own
9	sovereign lands, has filled that land. That does not
10	change the ownership of the sovereign lands.
11	They remain sovereign lands, and the State
12	has done it for a critical public purpose, And that
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Accretion
14	accretion, of course, would change.
15	MR. KNEEDLER: Accretion
16	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It would take
17	submerged State land and give it to the landowner.
18	MR. KNEEDLER: Accretion would, but but
19	avulsion or rapid change would not.
20	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So a foot I'll
21	get back to what I raised earlier. A foot a year, if
22	the State does it and it's a foot a year, does the
23	property owner get the foot, or does the State get the
24	foot?
25	MR. KNEEDLER: I I don't want to quibble,

1 but I think it depends. The -- the Florida Supreme 2 Court's decision in Sand Key was a situation where the 3 State had -- had erected a jetty or an offshore 4 structure that caused sand to accrete on the -- on the 5 property, and the Florida Supreme Court said that belongs to the littoral property owner under the 6 7 doctrine of -- of accretion. 8 On the other hand, if the State came along 9 once a year, on one day, and added a foot, that would 10 not be gradual and imperceptible, but would be quite 11 perceptible because the State would have added a foot of 12 property. And even though it's a small avulsion, I 13 think it -- I think it would still count as an avulsion. 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So it makes a 15 difference whether it's done in a day or done in a 16 month? 17 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, the -- the difference 18 between accretion and avulsion is whether it's gradual 19 and imperceptible or whether -- whether it is dramatic 20 or --21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What authority is there in 22 Florida law or in general law to say that the act of 23 an -- an artificial person is an accretion or avulsion, instead of just an act of nature? What -- what case do 24 25 I read or authority do I read?

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1	MR. KNEEDLER: Well, the Florida Supreme						
2	Court's decision in the in the Peppe case relied on						
3	Martin v. Busch, which I agree with Justice Scalia, it's						
4	very critical here, where there was State action in						
5	draining the lake, which exposed the surface the						
б	the formerly submerged land, and the Florida Supreme						
7	Court said that land belongs to the State, it was action						
8	by the State in a dramatic way.						
9	And Florida						
10	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But but did they call						
11	it an avulsion?						
12	MR. KNEEDLER: They they did not there,						
13	but in but in						
14	JUSTICE KENNEDY: That that so that						
15	doesn't answer my question.						
16	MR. KNEEDLER: No, but my point was, in						
17	Peppe, where where there was actually an avulsion,						
18	the court characterized what happened in Martin v. Busch						
19	as an avulsive act. But you don't need to label it						
20	avulsion because there's a separate doctrine that when						
21	the State fills its own land, it remains its own land.						
22	And I would like to point out this is not						
23	a unique doctrine						
24	JUSTICE ALITO: Can I Mr. Kneedler,						
25	before your time expires, what I agree, Martin v.						

1 Busch seems to be the case that's most -- provides the 2 greatest support for what the Florida Supreme Court did 3 here. But what do we do about the fact that the Florida 4 Supreme Court didn't rely on it? 5 MR. KNEEDLER: I -- I think it is 6 surprising, although the Florida Supreme Court did 7 discuss avulsion, but if -- if I could just make one 8 point? This is not a -- a unique notion in Florida law. 9 This Court's decision in 10 Hughes v. Washington, which dealt with accretion, 11 responded to the -- to the point that was -- that was 12 made there and said, well, the -- the littoral property 13 right is vulnerable anyway because the owner of the 14 adjacent submerged lands can always take action on his 15 own lands that could affect what the upland property 16 owner did. 17 And this -- and this Court said, yes, that's 18 right, but we're talking, here, about natural causes. 19 And in -- in Hughes, the Court cited two cases, one in 20 Washington State, for example, where the -- where there 21 was an absolute right to fill the submerged lands even 22 if that completely cut off access. 23 It also pointed out another case from New Jersey where -- where the -- a case of this -- from this 24 25 Court, where the Court said, you have a right to

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accretion as long as nobody's filled the land
 in-between.

3 But one --4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, what is 5 your -- I'm sorry. What -- what is your view on the hypothetical I posed to your -- to your friend? The 6 7 legislature moves it to the vegetation line. The State 8 Supreme Court says that's a taking. Somebody runs for election to the State Supreme Court, saying, I'm going 9 10 to change that. He's elected. He changes the law. 11 Is that a judicial taking? MR. KNEEDLER: Again, I think I would 12 13 analyze it under the fair and substantial basis. But, 14 yes, if there -- if there is no justification in 15 background law, if it's basically contextual, in the 16 same way that -- that any --17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, doesn't --18 it's not contextual. He says, I think they got the law 19 wrong. 20 MR. KNEEDLER: But if there's -- but the 21 phrasing the Court has used in the due process is

I mean, if -- if there's just -- if there's just -- if it's just ipse dixit. But there -- but there -- but that it is by no means true here. And it's

whether it's unforeseen and indefensible.

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important that Martin v. Busch was cited in the two - and distinguished in the two principal cases on which
 the Petitioner relies here.

4 In Sand Key, the Court distinguished Martin 5 v. Busch on the ground that in Sand Key it was an accretion, but -- and it distinguished Martin v. Busch б 7 on the -- on the ground that there it was a -- it was a sudden, dramatic action by the State, and the -- and the 8 same thing was also true in the Florida National case, 9 10 where the -- the Court again distinguished Martin v. 11 Busch on that ground.

JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, would you have answered Justice Scalia's question that there's a common -- a generally understood common law right, littoral right, to contact with the water? Would you say there is not?

MR. KNEEDLER: I would -- I would say there -- I would say it's tied up with the right of access, as long as the littoral property owner remains adjacent to the water.

But what you have here is a neighboring property owner, the sovereign, exercising critical sovereign rights over its property, which has its own property interests, and if under Florida law the -- the State is permitted to put sand on the beach -- this is

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1 -- this is not filling for an amusement park. This is 2 adding something that is very germane to the maintenance 3 of the beach, for critical public purposes, the very --4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It could be -- it 5 could be adding an amusement park, though, under your theory, right? б 7 MR. KNEEDLER: No, it -- I don't think 8 there's any universal theory of this. As I-- as I said in -- in the Port of Seattle case --9 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's the State's 11 property. It's the State's property. If they want to put an amusement park on, they can. 12 13 MR. KNEEDLER: It varies. And that may be 14 true in the Port of Seattle case discussed in Hughes, 15 where the State had the -- you're balancing the rights 16 of adjacent property owners, just like -- just like 17 nuisance or other principles do. In Washington State, 18 apparently, you could completely fill the submerged land 19 and the upland owner had no rights. 20 In Florida, Florida is actually more 21 protective than that. It has limited rights. You 22 maintain a right of view, a right against unreasonable 23 interference. So there's no one constitutionally-based It's a question of Florida property law And the 24 rule. 25 background principles of Florida property law under

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1	Martin v. Busch and the fact that the State owns the						
2	adjacent land, I think, not only is there there is						
3	more than a fair and substantial basis here. There is a						
4	it's very solidly grounded in State law.						
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Let's see if there						
6	are any further questions.						
7	(No response.)						
8	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.						
9	Mr. Safriet, 4 minutes.						
10	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF D. KENT SAFRIET						
11	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER						
12	MR. SAFRIET: Thank you, Your Honor.						
13	First, Martin v. Busch does not stand for						
14	the principles that the Respondents suggest they do.						
15	The Court in Sand Key said, and in and in						
16	distinguishing the Martin v. Busch case, and I quote,						
17	"Our subsequent decisions show there was no intent to						
18	change common law principles regarding the right to						
19	accretion and relictions in Martin v. Busch."						
20	And even if it did stand for that principle,						
21	Martin v. Busch case didn't discuss whether the						
22	landowner was entitled to compensation for the severance						
23	of their waterfront property as a result of the lowering						
24	of the water.						
25	What also must be noted here, that the State						

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1	is changing the deeds. They're changing the legal						
2	description and the deeds of the Petitioners' members.						
3	These Petitioners' members own to the mean high water						
4	line. They have a right, not only under Florida common						
5	law to own to the mean high water line, under their						
6	deeds, that's what they purchased. And there has been a						
7	lot of discussion and, I think, maybe some confusion						
8	about the right to contact the water.						
9	JUSTICE SCALIA: They wouldn't own to the						
10	mean high water mark if there were an avulsion, if						
11	right? If						
12	MR. SAFRIET: No, Your Honor.						
13	JUSTICE SCALIA: If by nature, this 60-foot						
14	beach had been brought in, then their deed would be						
15	changed, wouldn't it?						
16	MR. SAFRIET: Temporarily, Your Honor,						
17	because under the doctrine of reclamation, they can						
18	reclaim the boundary line they lost, just as if in a						
19	case where the hurricane washes sand away, the						
20	landowner, under common law, the doctrine of						
21	reclamation, can bring in sand where the water is to						
22	reconnect to that mean high water line that would be						
23	underwater following a hurricane.						
24	JUSTICE BREYER: Now, how does that work? I						
25	mean, I have a beachfront property; I wake up one						

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1 morning and there's a little half-mile island attached 2 to half of it, and there we are. Mean high water mark 3 is half a mile away. You say I can reclaim that under 4 Florida law? What's that mean? 5 MR. SAFRIET: Yes, Florida law allows, under the doctrine of reclamation, which is what the Florida 6 7 Supreme Court relied on --8 JUSTICE BREYER: Which is, how does it work? 9 MR. SAFRIET: You'd have to remove the sand. 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: You shovel away the sand. 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Oh, no, no. This is -- you 12 can't. You can't. 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: What if it's going the 14 opposite way? What if it's -- if they built up sand? I 15 mean --16 JUSTICE BREYER: It's rock. 17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes. 18 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay, so what happens? 19 MR. SAFRIET: I'm not sure the common law envisioned rock coming up to --20 21 JUSTICE BREYER: It can happen. Okay. So 22 my point is, I think, which is the same, I think, as 23 Justice Scalia, that he -- that the upland owner no 24 longer, under the law of Florida, has a way of getting 25 his land out to the mean high water mark. Am I right or

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1 wrong?

2 MR. SAFRIET: I think that's wrong, Your The doctrine of reclamation --3 Honor. 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Because? 5 MR. SAFRIET: Under the doctrine of reclamation, they can reclaim the boundary line. б That's 7 by depositing new sand where the water is to reach the 8 mean high water line, where it was prior to the 9 hurricane. They can do that. 10 Conversely, if sand is washed up as a result 11 of a hurricane, they can remove the sand, bring the 12 water line back to them. 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: They can go on the State 14 land to do that? Because that sand is sitting on State land. 15 16 MR. SAFRIET: That wouldn't be State -- they 17 can -- the common law allows them to reclaim what 18 they're lost -- what they lost, Your Honor. And the 19 Florida Supreme Court tries to rely on this doctrine of reclamation in this case. It asserts that the State is 20 only doing what it allowed under common law, reclaiming 21 the land it lost. 2.2 23 But in this case, the Florida Supreme Court, or the State of Florida, didn't ever possess any dry 24 25 sand land, so they can't reclaim any dry sand land. The

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only thing they have ever owned was the foreshore and
 the sovereign submerged lands. So that's the only thing
 they can reclaim.

I think there was other questions about the support for this case. There is more than five landowners that don't support this case. In the lower courts, there was another group, Save Our Beaches, that had, I believe, roughly 150 members that opposed this project as well in the City of Destin.

10 In this case, we're also dealing with a 11 physical taking.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why did they drop out? MR. SAFRIET: Lack of standing at the administrative hearing, Your Honor.

What we're dealing with in this case is a physical taking. What rights were physically possessed by the Respondents' members -- or, excuse me, the Petitioners' members in this case are now possessed by the State. It's a wholesale transfer of these rights, along with the transfer of the deed or the description of the deed. We're not asking this --

JUSTICE GINSBURG: I don't understand why isn't it -- it isn't equally an addition to the private property owners' rights when they had a narrow beach and now they're claiming that -- that it's all theirs, the

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1 whole 75 feet. 2 MR. SAFRIET: I'm sorry, Your Honor, I 3 didn't hear your question. 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: They have, under your 5 theory, much more property than they had before. They 6 have a wider beach that's theirs, so they have gained 7 property, but that doesn't count? 8 MR. SAFRIET: Well, they haven't gained 9 property, Your Honor, because the State's claiming title 10 to that new beach. So our -- the Petitioners' members 11 owned exactly what they owned as of September 7, 2003, when the property boundary was changed, and the new 12 boundary would -- the new land would be State-owned. 13 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Counsel. The case is submitted. 15 16 MR. SAFRIET: Thank you. 17 (Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the case in the 18 above-entitled matter was submitted. 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

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