



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape

March 15, 2016

It ain't over 'til it's over
~ Yogi Berra

Offshore Drilling

At noon today, the US Department of Interior announced its plan for award of offshore drilling leases for 2017-2022. Here's an excerpt, specific to the Mid and South Atlantic coasts (that's us):

After an extensive public input process, the sale that was proposed in the Draft Proposed Program in the Mid-and South Atlantic area has been removed from the program. Many factors were considered in the decision to remove this sale from the 2017-2022 program including: significant potential conflicts with other ocean uses such as the Department of Defense and commercial interests; current market dynamics; limited infrastructure; and opposition from many coastal communities.

We heard from many corners that now is not the time to offer oil and gas leasing off the Atlantic coast," added Jewell (Secretary of the Interior). "When you factor in conflicts with national defense, economic activities such as fishing and tourism, and opposition from many local communities, it simply doesn't make sense to move forward with any lease sales in the coming five years."

Here's the link to the full announcement: <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-department-announces-next-step-offshore-oil-and-gas-leasing-planning-process>

Very good news. But the threat has not been ended, only been suspended for five years.

The reasons specified for suspending the sale off our coast include commercial interests, other economic activities, national defense, and local opposition. Not a word about the potential for devastating environmental damage. There is a lesson here that we have learned many times. Officialdom doesn't give a s..t about the environment. The way to win environmental battles is economics. Economics stopped Titan. Economics stopped the megaport at Southport. But those threats have only come to a stop. Like drilling, they can be revived.

The local opposition of which the Feds speak came from coastal communities. It did not come from the State of North Carolina government. It did not come from the Brunswick County Commissioners. Although Oceana's diligent work produced resolutions of opposition from all of the County's coastal municipalities, the County Commissioners, as usual, listened to the boss, whoever that is, instead of their constituents, and adopted a resolution in support of offshore drilling. And another in support of offshore windmills. And another in favor of the megaport.

It ain't over. We have work to do.

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