



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape

April 3, 2012

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.

–Albert Einstein

One man with courage is a majority.

–Thomas Jefferson

Who Has the Courage?

For the first time in over 100 years, the party of “fiscal conservatism” controls the General Assembly. And so we ask, is it fiscally conservative to advance a megaport project that will cost the taxpayers of our State \$6.1 billion? Is it fiscally responsible to approve additional studies that could cost the taxpayers \$10-\$40 million more, on top of the \$50 million already spent? Is it fiscally sound to consider a deepwater port where the water is not deep? In the shadow of a nuclear plant?

We have not found any enthusiasm for the project in Raleigh. But no one stops it. Is there courage to do that in the General Assembly leadership? Can we count on the courage of Speaker Thom Tillis to demand language in the budget bill that prohibits additional spending for the megaport at Southport? Can we count on the courage of Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger to protect the taxpayers by ensuring the House language survives the whims of any individual Senator?

Can we count on the courage of our Senator, Bill Rabon, to join the startlingly few courageous members of the General Assembly who have made a pledge to prohibit any additional funding for a “port of dreams”?

We are blessed to have a few legislators in the General Assembly willing to stand up and be counted. Rep Frank Iler, Rep Carolyn Justice, Rep George Cleveland, Rep Glen Bradley, Rep Pricey Harrison, Rep Harry Warren, Senator Thom Goolsby, and Senator Jim Davis have pledged to support the language and deserve our gratitude, our support and re-election.

The language? A few lines in the budget bill prohibiting spending on a megaport at Southport is all it takes. There is even a place for it—§30.8. That would stop a rush of waste that started with the \$30 million spent in the Easley administration, followed by \$7 million in studies and \$10 million in debt service and even now, a plump \$2 million contract to study what has already been studied.

Inertia is a powerful sedative that allows bureaucratic projects to suck up money and take on a life of their own. It’s time for the House and the Senate to wake up and say, enough is enough.

It takes courage. Courage to buck the momentum. Courage to oppose the self-interest that pervaded government decisions for so many years. Will Senator Berger, Speaker Tillis and Senator Rabon show us that courage? And if not, why not?