



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape

August 1, 2011

WHEREAS, there has been recent public outcry regarding the planned sulphur smelting plant at the Morehead City Port due to potential incompatibility between the proposed use of the port and the existing economy within Morehead City, the Town of Beaufort, and Carteret County;

–Governor Beverly Perdue, Executive Order 99, July 27, 2011

Meanwhile, Back in Brunswick

A public outcry, indeed. The Mayor. The citizenry. A new organization, the Clean County Coalition, who organized the “sulfurous swim” on Saturday as a protest.

The result was gubernatorial jabbing of the errant state agency, the North Carolina State Ports Authority, and enough Perdue displeasure to persuade PCS Phosphate Company to look elsewhere for a place to melt its sulphur.

We applaud the Governor's prompt and effective response to the Morehead City sulfur threat. Her statements focus on economic consequences, urging that economic development activities “have an overall positive impact in the communities of which they are a part.” The Governor further found that state-operated facilities should be compatible with the “underlying economic base and existing predominant economic sectors supported by the surrounding community.” That, of course, is tourism, a prime mover of dollars, jobs and revenues to Carteret County and our State.

But what of Brunswick County? According to the Department of Commerce's most recent available data, Brunswick County is the ninth most important county in the State for tourism, well ahead of Carteret County. That economic impact generated \$344 million in 2009. More than 4,500 jobs are attributed to tourism, the tourism that generated \$41 million in State and local tax revenues. Statistics tell us that leisure and hospitality represent 19% of all employment in Brunswick County,

Why are we not heard in Raleigh? We remain under the dark cloud of the North Carolina International Terminal project, which would bring 5000 trucks a day to our roads, the largest ships with the largest and dirtiest diesel engines on earth to our waters, and a dredging project that would penetrate the aquifer and suck the sand off of our beaches. Our six impacted coastal communities would suffer a transformation in character and crushing economic loss of tourism dollars. Those six communities and their governing boards are steadfast and resolute in their opposition to this project. Vehement, even. And unanimous (except, alas, Southport's Mayor Howard, who declined to sign the resolution of opposition adopted by his Board of Aldermen and left that to the Mayor Pro Tem).

We hope the Governor will be as sensitive to the needs of our coastal communities' economic needs and the revenues produced through tourism as she was to the Morehead City sulfur project. She can shut down the NCIT as quickly as she shut down the sulphur project. Why not now?