



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape

September 14, 2011

The only thing necessary for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing.
–Edmund Burke

Save the Cape

As we reach the first anniversary celebration of Save the Cape, we look both backward and forward—at our achievements, our setbacks and our challenges in the year ahead.

We've had disappointments. The NC Senate removed language from the House budget bill that prohibited any funding, whatsoever, for the NC International Terminal. Save the Cape marched on Raleigh, demanding answers and got few. Everyone was mystified. Simply mystified as to how or why the language was removed. No one claimed responsibility. No one admitted knowledge. But the language is gone and there is much opportunity for mischief through various state agencies such as DENR and the Department of Transportation. One more study, they said. Then it will be over.

And so the Department of Transportation has launched a \$1.7 million Maritime Strategy Study. Its premise portends the result, “How can North Carolina ports be competitive in the global shipping industry.” We ask, why is that important? A more honest, less biased question might be, “How can North Carolina business be competitive in global markets?” But when you structure a study to justify 46 million buckaroos already spent, you lose objectivity. And integrity.

So the study proceeds to find a place for the ports. Ports that suck up state funds. Including, we hasten to add, the International Terminal actively planned for Southport, which has consumed \$30 million for land now worth \$12.7 million, \$9 million for studies showing the stupendous challenge and cost of the project (\$4.4 billion), and another \$7 million to service the still-outstanding debt. That's how bureaucrats and their handmaiden consultants think. Feed me, Seymour.

A fine study it is, with a shiny new website and a promised program of public outreach. Oh, they have heard the shippers and truckers who want competitive pressure on the out-of-state ports that 80% of them use. But as for the actual public: uh-uh. The study is scheduled for completion in December but to date, not a single community meeting has been offered. An impromptu gathering to express local views was much resented. Our mayors have heard nary a word suggesting a tête-à-tête to discuss the impact the NCIT might have on their coastal communities, to assess the local compatibility Governor Perdue's Executive Order 99 requires. But, oh, the Web site is purdy.

That's our challenge. To make ourselves heard. To put the port project behind us. And to watch for other reckless schemes to sacrifice local interests for bureaucratic sustenance.

We can meet that challenge, with your help. Our Facebook page has grown to 647 fans. We have nearly 600 signatures on our online petition. And we received a significant grant for operating expenses from The Raymond Fund to help us carry on the fight. And carry on we will.

Save the Cape, Inc

Post Office Box 10542
www.savethecape.org

Southport, NC 28461