

Huge Win for NC 20

July 2012 Newsletter

Despite all odds, the push by NC 20 to demand responsible science concerning Sea Level Rise succeeded. Rep. Pat McElraft and Rep. Bill Cook started with H 819 in the House dealing with property setbacks, and passed the ball to Sen. Harry Brown after the House passed it. He got the Sea Level Rise provisions inserted and rallied his Senatorial colleagues. After some impressive leadership, the bill was passed by a 35 – 12 vote. Sen. David Rouzer, Wayne and Johnston Counties, gave a particularly rousing address in support during the Senate debate. The bill went back to the House for concurrence and there was met with a tidal wave of criticism from environmental groups. As strange as it may be, it seemed they wanted a huge rise in sea level, although their motives were never clearly articulated. Almost humorously, NC 20 Board Members were verbally assaulted by opponents of the Bill wanting to know who the big money developers were behind our efforts. They couldn’t believe we had no paid employees and about $8,000 in the bank.

Pat McElraft

Given the outcry which greeted the revised bill, the House voted to send it to a conference committee. The committee consisted of Reps. McElraft, Ruth Samuelson, from Charlotte, Tim Spear, Mike Hager, and Frank Iler. On the senate side were: Sens. [Sen. David Rouzer](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?sChamber=Senate&nUserID=234), Chair**,** [Sen. Jean Preston](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?sChamber=Senate&nUserID=202), [Sen. Harry Brown](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?sChamber=Senate&nUserID=139), [Sen. Thom Goolsby](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?sChamber=Senate&nUserID=331), and [Stan White](http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/viewMember.pl?sChamber=Senate&nUserID=365). The final bill was modified from an outright ban on unscientific forecasting to a four year suspension with a study, but it accomplished the purpose. It prohibited the unscientific speculation that had infected the whole SLR process and required diverse scientific sources be consulted. After a spirited debate, the bill passed 40 – 1 in the Senate and 68-46 in the House. We do not have the room to summarize all of the comments, but here are a few highlights: Of course, Pat McElraft led the way as the sponsor, and it was apparent she had mastered the subject. She not uncharacteristically spoke with great passion. A number of Piedmont legislators were solid in their commitment to science over speculation as well. From our corner of the world, Rep. George Cleveland of Onslow County delivered his comments with the professorial demeanor he is known for. He had stopped the use of the CRC’s 39” projection in flood mapping by getting the Secretaries of Crime Control and Public Safety and of Commerce to a meeting several months ago with NC 20. That resulted in a reduction in the projected SLR for flood mapping purposes from 39” to 8”, a difference of 1500 square miles in land impacted. Frank Iler spoke forcefully as well and showed he had read our letters carefully. He quickly corrected another Representative who had asserted that melting icebergs raised the water level. (they don’t – Archimedes c.250 B.C.)

In the Senate, Sen. Harry Brown masterfully maneuvered the Bill to a near –unanimous conclusion. As Senate Majority Leader, he is now the most senior of the eastern leaders in the legislature, and his standing with the other Senators has been demonstrated beyond question. One must wonder what the future holds.

What now? Even prior to the passage of this bill, the CRC had made some serious revisions. But, while they removed numerical mandates, their latest revision continues to state that: “Sea level rise ... is a ubiquitous threat that gradually intensifies…” Read between the lines.

NC 20 provided numerous scientific studies showing that despite 80 years of manmade CO2 increase, there is no acceleration in Sea Level Rise. Here are a few quotes:

**Douglas (1992), Journal of Geophysical Research (JGR), analyzed worldwide**

**gauges and found a deceleration from 1905-1985**

• **Jevrejeva et al (2006), JGR, found a deceleration for 20th Century**

• **Holgate (2007), Geophysical Research Letters, found a deceleration**

**from 1904-2003**

• **Church et al (2004), Journal of Climate, found no increase in the rate of**

**sea level rise from 1*950-2000***

• **Woodworth (2006), Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, said**

**Not According to the Peer Reviewed Literature**

**US Army Corps of Engineers® Engineer Research and Development Center**

***“... No definitive long-term acceleration of sea level has been identified***

***using 20th Century data alone”***

• **Woodworth et al (2009), International Journal of Climatology, note**

***“… little evidence has been found in individual gauge records for an***

***ongoing positive acceleration of the sort suggested for the 20th***

***Century by climate models*” (From a presentation by Dr. Robert Dean, Professor Emeritus, U. Florida, to NC 20, October 7, 2011.)**

NC 20 is grateful to all the legislators, both Eastern and from the rest of the State, who had the courage to stand up to the intense pressure from the lobbyists who blanketed the halls of Jones Street on a daily basis.

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