



## PRESS RELEASE

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[www.sustainablecoast.org](http://www.sustainablecoast.org) *Supporting responsible decisions to sustain the quality of life in coastal Georgia.*

### Center Co-Hosts Tybee Event Helping Climate with Responsible Energy

*Scores gather at "Hands Across the Sand" event on Tybee Island beach to Say "Yes!" to Clean Energy*

On May 17, about sixty environmentally concerned Georgians gathered near the Tybee Island pier to join hands at the Atlantic shoreline to show support for clean energy and opposition to dirty power sources. The Tybee event was one of about a hundred similar demonstrations coordinating solidarity in promoting responsible energy policy held throughout the nation.

Center executive director, David Kyler, told the crowd that "The term 'energy independence' used to be a good thing because it meant switching to clean sources of power, like solar and wind. But with the advent of fracking, Big Oil has hijacked the term, so that producing more dirty fuels in the U.S. is now being justified by linking it to energy independence. Such claims are deviously dishonest because as these exported fuels are burned – anywhere in the world – we will be spreading disaster by compounding climate-change damages, and clearly subverting the virtues of independence."

Among the consequences of an overheating global climate is rising sea level, which threatens all coastal areas, especially the U.S. Southeast. Moreover, more severe weather – that triggers floods, drought, crop-loss, and extremely destructive wildfires – is directly related to climate change.

Karen Graine, chairperson of Georgia Sierra Club's Coastal Group, welcomed everyone and provided some history about "Hands Across the Sands." Georgia's Sierra Club's executive director, Colleen Kiernan, said that "To prevent the worst consequences of climate change, we must say NO to dirty fossil fuels and Yes to clean energy!" The crowd responded with enthusiastic applause.

Clay Davidson, chairman of the Georgia chapter of Surfrider Foundation, commented about the destructive effects of methods used to search for offshore oil and gas. "Seismic devices emit intense bursts of ultrasonic sound-waves that are very harmful to a broad range of marine life – including sea turtles, dolphins, and whales. Using these devices is extremely irresponsible and must be stopped." Davidson asked participants to sign a petition objecting to the use of offshore seismic devices.

At present the U.S. has no energy policy, largely due to the coercive resistance of politically corrupting energy producers who are reaping record-breaking profits from selling dirty energy. As a result, federal and state government officials continue taking steps that worsen the growing problems of climate change – including federal programs that work at cross purposes by lavishly subsidizing oil, gas, and coal producers while other government efforts warn about the dangers of climate change.

Tybee City Councilman, Paul Wolff, said that Tybee was already making strides to convert to clean energy and the solar panels he installed on his own home have generated enough for all his power needs and delivered a surplus into the grid for four years. He said that if we wanted to continue to enjoy Georgia's wonderful coast, including the beach at Tybee Island, we need to transition away from fossil fuels and toward solar and wind power. Doing so will not only save millions of gallons of water every day, but will reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality.

Despite 26 states taking initiatives to set target dates for converting from dirty fuels to clean solar and wind energy, Georgia remains conspicuously passive. And, while political leaders here call climate-change policy a "job-killer," Georgia enjoys fast-growing employment in the solar industry.

Earlier this year, as part of its climate change initiative, the Center decided to financially support Hands Across the Sand, a national movement promoting rapid conversion from fossil fuels to clean energy.

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