

Dear Mayor Morrissey, Council members, and others,

In today's Tribune & Georgian there were several letters to the editor about the proposed Port of St. Marys. In Mr. Dave Southern's letter he states "This was driven home by a representative of the Southern Environmental Law Center who came from Atlanta to attend last Thursday's planning commission meeting. She laid out what SELC considers the essential environment elements of the development but, interestingly, she made no indication that they were against the proposal. I took that to indicate that the SELC thinks the developer "gets it" about how important the environmental aspects of their plan are..."

In that, at this point, the only action-item on the table is rezoning the site to allow for the creation of a barge port, it is impossible for agencies such as SELC to be "against the proposal" on a legal basis. The citizens have been asked to make a decision and yet are being denied the opportunity to make an INFORMED decision for we are not being told what industries may be involved. We have heard that the developer, Chris Ragucci, "has industries lined up" awaiting rezoning but he has chosen not to reveal more detailed information.

With all due respect to Mr Southern, to assume that SELC "thinks the developer "gets it" about how important the environmental aspects of their plan are..." is both wrong and misleading. Example: Mr Ragucci has spoken about on-site manufacturing such as biomass and wood-pellet fuels. SELC has taken a very clear and active position on this issue: <https://www.southernenvironment.org/cases-and-projects/biomass-energy-in-the-south>

I have alerted Ms Helen Barnes (SELC's speaker at the Planning Commission meeting) and she has thanked me attempting to clear up the misconceptions. Hopefully, SELC will be issuing a letter to further dispel any suggestion that they "support" the barge port proposal.

Respectfully,

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Chair
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