

Response to Commissioner Sykes' op-ed

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 08.29.24

We, the undersigned, feel compelled to address Commissioner Pat Sykes' recent letter to the editor regarding her role in the takeover of Southport's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) by Brunswick County.

For those unaware, an ETJ allows a town to manage zoning beyond its borders, protecting citizens through planning. Southport's tree ordinance, established years ago to preserve its unique charm and protect our fragile area from flooding, was supported by residents and imposed fines for unauthorized tree removal.

Earlier this year, an ETJ resident was fined for allegedly removing trees without a permit. However, the fine was later voided after it was determined the trees had been removed long ago. This individual, notably, resides in Commissioner Sykes' neighborhood and has close ties with state representatives. Following the fine, Sykes and a few neighbors petitioned their friend, House Rep. Charlie Miller, to change the law, wiping out Southport's ETJ to avoid paying the fine.

This wasn't driven by broad community support but by a small clique with influential connections. Disturbingly, this action was taken without public input from the ETJ community or Southport. Through these privileged relationships, they dismantled Southport's ability to enforce its zoning protections, leaving residents vulnerable to unrestrained development.

Now, Commissioner Sykes seeks to mislead citizens again. Her motivation is clear: she wants your vote.

We urge everyone to examine the facts, available through the City of Southport, and let truth, not political maneuvering, guide your decisions. The removal of Southport's ETJ sets a dangerous precedent for all Brunswick County towns.

Citizens have had enough of politicians who endanger our fragile environment, our safety and quality of life. The citizens have had enough.

No High-Density Southport, Ginny Prunty
Stop Over Developing in Brunswick County, Christie Marek
Preserve Brunswick County and Shallotte Pointe Preservation Group, Ash Ramos
Cape Fear Sierra Club, Richard Eggeling
We Live Here Leland, Trish Farnham