

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY URGES FELLOW HUNTERS TO PRESS CONGRESS TO STOP OLF

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today sent a letter to his fellow hunters, including members of Ducks Unlimited, urging them to appeal to members of Congress to withhold funding for the U.S. Navy’s proposal to put an outlying landing field in Eastern North Carolina. The site is near one of the most important waterfowl reserves in the Atlantic Flyway near the Beaufort-Washington county line. The text of the letter is below.

“Dear Fellow Hunter:

“The U.S. Navy’s proposal to build an outlying landing field in Washington and Beaufort counties near the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge includes a plan that may well eliminate the waterfowl there. This world-renowned refuge for migratory birds serves as the winter home to more than 100,000 ducks, swans, snow geese, and countless other waterfowl. If you have ever been to Lake Mattamuskeet or Lake Pungo, you know the value of this resource.

“During the past three years, I have had numerous meetings with the Navy at the Pentagon and here in Raleigh. I have repeatedly offered to help the Navy with more suitable locations in North Carolina but they have refused to consider any alternatives. I am more than willing to work with the Navy, but they have not responded in kind.

“The Navy used its recently issued Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to continue its misguided commitment to an outlying landing field site that threatens to ruin this irreplaceable natural resource. In this report, the Navy suggests they have the ability to “manage” this fragile environmental challenge. You can visit the Navy’s website at www.efaircraft.ene.com/docs_seis.aspx. They admit they plan to control the waterfowl population by “poisoning, trapping, shooting, employing predatory birds, dogs and limiting their feeding grounds.” This is not a plan for management of a prime feeding area for the Atlantic Flyway’s waterfowl population. It is clearly a plan that could well destroy the refuge.

“I have repeatedly asked our congressional delegation to help with this urgent matter. North Carolina’s U.S. Senators Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr say they do not want to interfere with the military’s efforts to find an airfield for pilots to practice aircraft carrier landings. I ask you to contact your senators and congressional delegations. Ask them to withhold funding for this project until the Navy makes a good faith attempt to consider reasonable locations.

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“Like many of you, I have hunted in the fields, woods, and marshes of eastern North Carolina since I was a boy. I know first hand as a sportsman, father and state leader how important it is to be able to share outdoor experiences and make sure they are always available to future generations. I need to enlist you in the battle we are waging to protect the one of the most important waterfowl reserves in North America.

“I need you to join me in calling and writing your members of Congress who control the purse strings for the Navy’s proposal to build an outlying landing field. Tell them the Navy must stop considering the site near the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. We must take a stand and not let this unique refuge be destroyed.

“I regret that I find myself at odds with the U.S. Navy, but I assure you I have done everything within my power to find additional, better locations for the outlying landing field. They give me no alternative.”

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