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## Our coast merits special treatment

Last year the Georgia legislature created a commission to study issues surrounding the construction of petroleum pipelines in Georgia.

This group held hearings, listened to technical experts, as well as interested and concerned citizens, and developed informed recommendations for state pipeline legislation.

I spoke to the commission, and afterwards the commission chair told me, “They heard you. They didn’t like it, but they listened. They heard you.” The commissioners eventually drafted recommendations for legislation which reflected their honest listening, and fair and open minds. This is the way Georgia government should work.

Now the House Energy, Utilities, and Telecommunications Committee Chair, Don Parsons, has peremptorily thrown out the committee’s recommendations and replaced them with proposed legislation which could have been, and I believe probably was, written by the pipeline company Kinder Morgan.

This is the way Georgia government actually does work.

Parsons, a representative from gridlocked Marietta (my home town), said he could see no reason for coastal Georgia receiving special protections.

Perhaps he is right, maybe all Georgians should be protected by representatives who act in their behalf, accept responsibility for what they do, and exercise thoughtful precaution when addressing potentially catastrophic proposals by ruthless corporations and their political lackeys.

Still, our coast is highly vulnerable to oil spills, flat and interlaced with thousands of miles of tidal guts, streams, rivers, and other waterways which can easily spread petroleum spills over many thousands of acres.

Highly valued, beloved, and irreplaceable, Georgia’s coast does warrant special consideration — at least that’s what many of her residents and visitors think. Of course, Representative Parsons knows nothing of those things.

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