‘Hands Across the Sand’ is coming to Pensacola Beach on May 16

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NOT A STOCK PHOTO: This photo of the Gulf of Mexico was taken at Pensacola Beach near Portofino Island Resort.

Gulf Coast residents opposed to offshore drilling and for clean energy solutions will meet on Pensacola Beach to “draw a line in the sand” on May 16.
“Hands Across the Sand” is an annual international event. Supporters “come together to champion a transition from our fossil fuel dependency to a new era of clean, renewable energy and a sustainable planet. On the local, national and global level, joining hands sends a powerful visual message of human solidarity to our leaders and decision makers,” according to a press release by the group.

Locally, Jo Billups and Karen Harvill, the folk music duo known as Sassafrass, will kick off the event at 11 a.m. The singer/songwriters are environmental activists who have performed for Greenpeace, the WWF in Copenhagen, the Sierra Club, climate conferences and festivals.

Speakers include Christian Wagle, 350 Pensacola Programs Director who will speak on “reversing urban sprawl and creating healthy, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly communities to help lead us to a clean energy future.”

Attendees are encouraged to walk, bike, paddle, carpool or use mass transit to the beach. Participants will walk to the waterfront just before 12 p.m. and stand together at noon, joining hands for 15 minutes to say “no to dirty fossil fuels and yes to clean energy.”

Hands Across the Sand is endorsed by national environmental organizations including Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Oceana, Surfrider Foundation, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Gulf Restoration Network, and Center for a Sustainable Coast.

In past years, Hands Across the Sand was held at Casino Beach, but has moved to Park West Gulf Side for this year’s event.

Visit handsacrossthesand.org for details, and join the event on Facebook.

For more information, call Elaine Sargent at (850) 572-7230, or email 350pensacola@gmail.com.

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