



# NoPort News

A newsletter of the North Carolina International Terminal

*All the news that prints to fit.*

November 5, 2009

## ***The Cost of Dredging Redux***

Your faithful editor has been chastised (deservedly) by the Deputy District Engineer of the Wilmington District of the US Army Corps of Engineers for presenting incorrect information on the Wilmington harbor deepening project in the newsletter for yesterday. Some corrections:

- We stated that the cost of the project had risen to \$533,000,000 as of April 2009, and that it was not complete. That figure represents the estimated cost to completion, not actual expenditures to date. Actual expenditures are approximately \$338,000,000.
- The share of the total project cost to be paid by the State of North Carolina is \$174,000,000, slightly less than 35%. Some portions of the State share can be deferred.
- Of the actual costs, the State has allocated \$88,000,000, substantially less than 35% of the costs to date. The Federal government has allocated \$250,000,000, which is more than its 65% share. The State would be obliged to allocate an additional \$86,000,000 to meet its proportionate share of the full project cost.
- The portion of the project that is complete is the deepening of the channel from the ocean bar south of the mouth of the Cape Fear River to the State Port at Wilmington.
- Yet to be completed are deepening and enlargement of parts of the harbor upstream of the State Port, and certain mitigation measures. Funds for such completion have not been appropriated. We understand that the portion of the project upstream of the Memorial Bridge has been put on hold because there is now only a single user that would benefit.

The failure to complete the mitigation measures, in particular a fish passage at the lock and dam above the harbor, has earned the Corps reproaches from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Striped bass, shad, and sturgeon (including the shortnose sturgeon, an endangered species) are restricted from reaching fresh water spawning grounds above the dam, with negative effects on fish population. We find it remarkable, and reprehensible, that the Corps has deferred this project, intended to mitigate the environmental damage from dredging, until after the damage has been done and the funds exhausted. To be effective, such mitigation measures should be in place before the damage, eh?

Our estimate of the cost of a new channel for the North Carolina International Terminal must also be revised. The amount of dredged material represented by the \$533 million estimated cost is approximately 27 million cubic yards, so the removal of 68.3 million cubic yards for a new channel would cost approximately \$1.35 billion; 60% of that, about \$800 million, would be for the account of the State of North Carolina. (The Corps does not endorse that figure.)

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