



NoPort News

A newsletter of the North Carolina International Terminal

All the news that prints to fit.

June 14, 2010

Laws and Sausages

The making of laws is not a pretty process—causing Otto von Bismark to utter his famous statement “Laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made.”

The budget bill currently being considered in the State Assembly, S897, is one of those sausages. The Senate has passed a bill, and the House has amended it. The differences are being reconciled by a Conference Committee, a large committee as unwieldy as the full Assembly.

The issue we face is the possibility of State funding of a feasibility study for the North Carolina International Terminal under the Senate bill, but not the House bill, and how this will be reconciled. In response to messages to Senator Marc Basnight, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, his Director of Special Projects, Chris Dillon provided this:

Thank you for your email. Our office understands the concerns of the residents of Southport. I would urge you to share your concerns with the local governments in Brunswick County and Senator R.C. Soles. At the current time, the project was not funded in either the Senate or House versions of the budget. Again, thank you for your email. If there is anything I can do to assist you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Chris Dillon
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While Mr. Dillon's statement about funding of the International Terminal is technically correct, the Senate version includes this additional language:

If any projects funded under subsection (a) of this section are delayed and the budgeted State funds cannot be used during the 2010-2011 fiscal year, or if the projects funded under subsection (a) of this section are accomplished at a lower cost, the Department may use the resulting fund availability to fund any of the following:

- (1) US Army Corps of Engineers project feasibility studies.

Thus unused funds could be applied to the feasibility study for the North Carolina International Terminal. This interpretation was confirmed by Tom Reeder of the DENR Water Resources Division to Mr. Dillon in our presence on a recent visit. That Division handles these matters.

It was this possibility that led Representative Pricey Harrison to sponsor an amendment to the House version of the bill to specifically prohibit expenditures for the International Terminal. That amendment passed by an overwhelming majority, 104-11. We hope that survives.

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