



NoPort News

A newsletter of the North Carolina International Terminal

All the news that prints to fit.

July 1, 2010

A Little Good News Today

Yesterday, June 30, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Appropriations Act of 2010, establishing the budget for this fiscal year. The Governor signed it immediately.

The Act includes a prohibition against spending for the proposed North Carolina International Terminal from the State general fund or from funds appropriated for other projects and not used.

The original bill passed by the Senate did not have such a prohibition, and would have permitted the use of unused funds for water resources projects to be used for State payments for a feasibility study for the container terminal. When the bill was being considered in the House of Representatives, Representative Pricey Harrison (D. Guilford) sponsored an amendment to prevent that and to prohibit the use of any State funds for the project. Representative Frank Iler (R. Brunswick) supported the amendment, and it passed by an overwhelming majority: 104-11.

The issue was in doubt when the conflicting Senate and House bills were being reconciled in conference committee. The State Ports Authority lobbied heavily against the House amendment. David Redwine, a former member of the Assembly with long-standing relationships with the leadership, worked to persuade the leadership to preserve the House amendment; he was successful. He was not alone, however. We understand that members of the committee were on the receiving end of a flood of messages from constituents in the Cape Fear region.

The day before, US Representative Mike McIntyre announced his opposition to the container terminal. Congressman McIntyre traditionally has sought and obtained Federal funds for dredging projects in the region. Without his support, Federal funding for dredging for the container terminal would have to be obtained through a different sponsor.

For the container terminal to advance, both State and Federal funding is required. As of yesterday, neither is available.

But as Yogi said (or is said to have said), "It ain't over 'til it's over." The State moratorium on funding for the container terminal can be undone when the Assembly reconvenes in January. The State Ports Authority can undertake the funding in its own—a letter of intent to do that has already been approved by its Board of Directors. As for the Federal funding, there are other members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation who may be willing to sponsor an appropriation.

We cannot relax. Until the property purchased by the State Ports Authority is devoted to another use, the project remains alive.

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