



# NoPort News

## A newsletter opposed to the North Carolina International Terminal

*All the news that prints to fit.*

### **No Port Southport Web Site is Back!**

Thanks to diligent work by our web master and help from a local company, InterCoastal Net Designs, technical problems that crashed our web site have been resolved. We also upgraded our site and moved it to a different host. Although this was a painful experience, we managed to maintain our good humor, dedication, and address: [www.noportsouthport.org](http://www.noportsouthport.org).

### **\*No Comment\***

Last month the Brunswick County Commissioners voted in favor of a feasibility study for the proposed NCIT mega port at Southport. This, despite: the estimated \$10+ million price tag for such a study; no money allocated by the State of North Carolina, the U.S. Congress, or the Army Corps of Engineers to fund such a study; and the overwhelming evidence against NCIT which we provided to the Commissioners last year. Apparently, our Commissioners are guided by something other than facts and common sense.

### **No Port Southport Speaks (again) to the NC Maritime Study Team**

As we reported in a previous newsletter, NPSP met earlier this summer with representatives from two private consulting companies, AECOM and URS, hired by the NC Dept. of Transportation for \$2 million as part of a team to develop a [maritime strategy](#) for North Carolina. The stated purpose of this strategy is to "take a fresh look at North Carolina's maritime assets and the needs for improvement", including the proposed mega port in Southport. We were dismayed that the [Advisory Council](#) appointed to work with the Maritime Strategy Team consists almost entirely of business and political entities that would benefit from more money spent in expanding ports and infrastructure. At our summer meeting, we provided the Maritime Strategy Team with many facts and multiple studies showing the economic and environmental folly of a deep-water port on the Cape Fear River. Afterwards, our consensus was that this meeting was merely a "courtesy call" so that the Team could say they had met with all concerned parties.

On September 4, as part of a public meeting in Wilmington Jim Miller and Al Willis of NPSP's Steering Committee spoke to the Maritime Strategy Team. Here is what we told them:

"The creation of a functional, effective maritime strategy for North Carolina will be a critical factor in the evolution of the shipping and other port-related industries in the state. It is therefore incumbent upon the Maritime Strategy Team to seriously consider, and give extraordinary weight to the economic factors, which have and will impact those industries in North Carolina. It is our contention that such consideration by the Maritime Strategy Team will lead to the determination that North Carolina will be best served, in terms of new jobs and expanded port traffic, by a strategy that focuses on improving our existing ports, and not on the creation of a new port.

In considering the arguments in favor of building a new port, the North Carolina State Ports Authority leaned heavily on the expansion of the Panama Canal. That argument held that a widened canal would lead to larger ships coming to the East Coast. What the NCSPA did not factor in, apparently, is what the CEO of the Panama Canal, Alberto Aleman, did consider. Mr. Aleman has categorically stated that any increase in larger ships through the canal can be handled by only two deep-water ports on the East Coast and one on the Gulf Coast. "The East Coast has many ports, and the large container ships are not going to stop at every port," Aleman said. Here we have a knowledgeable, unbiased expert stating that the vast majority of ports on the East Coast will not see increased traffic, and may never see any of the larger ships making port calls. There are already two ports in the Southeast (Norfolk, Savannah) that can handle, or are preparing to handle the larger ships. Several other existing ports are planning to deepen their channels. If this were a race, North Carolina's thoughts about a deep-water port would be considered a "non-starter", a full ten years or more behind everyone else.

Among the other economic factors impacting the shipping industry in the Southeastern US, the most telling statistic is the excessive overcapacity that now exists. Data from several sources, including the Maritime Strategy Team's report to the Maritime Advisory Committee on Sept. 16, 2011, and a study by Dr. Jeff Davis of The Citadel, confirm that the overcapacity for handling containers in the Southeastern states, when you consider all the expansion now underway, will last until past the year 2025. That is if the growth in containers runs at 5%. At a more realistic 3% annual growth rate, the overcapacity stretches out well past 2034, at which point there would still be capacity that exceeded need by 123%. These data confirm that building a new port will simply dump more capacity on an industry that is already over-capacity, meaning underutilization and a continuation of the drain on taxpayers in North Carolina.

As the economics of a new deep-water port do not support that venture, it is strongly urged that the Maritime Strategy Team focus heavily on ways in which existing port facilities and infrastructure can be expanded and improved upon in order to attract more of our in-state generated shipping (e.g. agricultural, furniture, etc.). This strategy will lead to longer-term job improvement and additional revenue for the state due to increased usage of our current ports."

**NO PORT Southport NC, Inc.**

**Post Office Box 10062**

**Southport, NC 28461**

[www.noportsouthport.org](http://www.noportsouthport.org)