



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Wilmington District

CESAW-ECP-PE

NOTICE OF EARLY SCOPING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

WILMINGTON HARBOR 403 LETTER REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WILMINGTON HARBOR NAVIGATION PROJECT, NORTH CAROLINA

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Wilmington District, in partnership with the North Carolina State Ports Authority (NCSPA), is advising Federal, State, and local governmental agencies and the public that the Corps, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is conducting early scoping to inform the environmental review for evaluating transportation improvements for the Wilmington Harbor Navigation Project, North Carolina, including deepening and widening of the navigation channel. The USACE will be conducting the environmental review in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR part 1500-1508), and USACE Procedures For Implementing NEPA (33 CFR part 230), and other related environmental review requirements.

USACE is conducting early scoping for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report and EIS and is inviting the public to comment on the scope of the analysis. Early scoping comments are used to identify significant resources and issues of concern that should be evaluated, and in the development of alternatives.

Comment Submittal: USACE is requesting receipt of comments by June 30, 2023. The public is invited to submit comments using one or more of the following methods:

Email: WilmingtonHarbor403@usace.army.mil

Mail: US Army Corps of Engineers
Wilmington District
ATTN: Wilmington Harbor 403
69 Darlington Avenue
Wilmington, NC 28403

Online: Online comments may be made through the Public Comment Tool. The Public Comment Tool can be found on the project website:
<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

Public Meeting: USACE will be hosting an open house style public meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 4:00 PM Cape Fear Community College, Union Station Building, 502 N Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401.

The meeting will offer opportunities for participants to visit various stations to engage members of our team, learn about the project, ask questions, and submit written comments. The meeting schedule:

- 4:00-4:30pm Welcome, introduction video, and sign in
- 4:30-7:00pm Open house, with themed stations
- 4:30-5:00pm Presentation by USACE
- 6:00-6:30pm Repeat Presentation by USACE

Background Information: A draft environmental report and integrated feasibility study for potential navigation improvements to the Wilmington Harbor Federal navigation channel leading from the Atlantic Ocean to the Port of Wilmington, North Carolina, was prepared in 2020 by the NCSPA under the authority granted by Section 203 of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986. The Port's study area was the existing Wilmington Harbor federal navigation channel that originates offshore and extends approximately 38 miles through the Atlantic Ocean and up the Cape Fear River to the City of Wilmington, NC where it services the Port of Wilmington. The existing project provides for a channel -44 feet Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) through the ocean bar and entrance channel, changing to -42 feet (MLLW) extending to just downstream of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. The Port of Wilmington has experienced increases in cargo volume and in the size of vessels calling at the port since the last major channel improvements were completed by the USACE under the Wilmington Harbor Project authorized under WRDA of 1996. The project was conditionally authorized under Section 403 of WRDA of 2020: Authorization of Projects Based on Feasibility Studies Prepared by Non-Federal Interests.

The WRDA 2020 Section 403 authorization for the navigation project, Wilmington Harbor, North Carolina, is conditioned upon the resolution of comments from the review assessment of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works (ASA(CW)), titled "Review Assessment of Wilmington Harbor, North Carolina Navigation Improvement Project Integrated Section 203 Study & Environmental Report (February 2020)" and dated May 17, 2020. This evaluation is being conducted in response to the comments from the ASA(CW) review.

For additional information about the project and to learn more about how to submit comments, please visit our website:

<https://wilmington-harbor-usace-saw.hub.arcgis.com/>

Bret Walters

Bret Walters

Chief, Planning and Environmental Branch