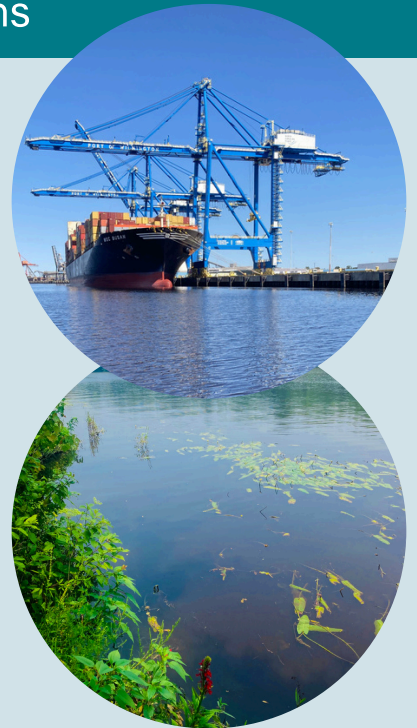


# Protect the Lower Cape Fear River: Impacts on Communities, Economy, and Resilience

*The proposed deepening and widening of Wilmington Harbor is not just an environmental issue – it directly affects North Carolina’s communities, taxpayers, and long-term coastal resilience.*

## Economic and Taxpayer Concerns

- **High Costs with Limited Public Benefit:** The project is projected to cost over \$1.3 billion upfront, with \$14 million annually in maintenance. Yet the only clear economic benefit identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) primarily serves private shipping companies, not local ports, workers, or coastal communities.
- **Ongoing Maintenance Burden:** Deeper channels require more frequent dredging, adding unpredictable costs for decades and increasing taxpayer exposure to financial risk.
- **Limited Local Economic Gain:** Wilmington already accommodates large vessels; the expansion is unlikely to create substantial new jobs or growth in local industries while placing communities at greater environmental and economic risk.



## Community and Environmental Justice

- **Disproportionate Impacts on Vulnerable Communities:** Residents near the river, often including historically marginalized and low-income communities, face increased flooding, pollution exposure, and health risks from contaminated dredged sediments and increased vessel traffic.
- **Threats to Public Health:** Dredging could release PFAS and other toxins into local waterways, putting drinking water, recreational areas, and seafood sources at risk.
- **Loss of Public Spaces and Livelihoods:** Shoreline erosion and habitat destruction undermine fishing, boating, and recreational opportunities that sustain coastal communities both culturally and economically.



# Resilience and Climate Risk

- **Amplifying Flood and Storm Impacts:** Deepening the harbor allows storm surge to travel further upriver, increasing flooding during hurricanes and extreme weather – putting homes, businesses, and infrastructure at risk.
- **Erosion of Natural Flood Protection:** Wetlands, marshes, and tidal creeks that naturally buffer communities against storms would be destroyed or degraded, reducing resilience to climate change.
- **Long-Term Risk Undervalued:** The Corps' Draft EIS underestimates sea level rise and compound flooding, leaving communities exposed to escalating costs and hazards.



## Bottom Line

- This project **puts taxpayer money at risk** for a private benefit.
- It **threatens community health, safety, and resilience**, especially for vulnerable populations.
- It **destroys natural defenses** that protect the Lower Cape Fear River region from storms, flooding, and climate impacts.

North Carolinians deserve better – **invest in resilient, equitable solutions, not a harbor expansion that primarily benefits private corporations.**

Learn more at [nccoast.org/port](https://nccoast.org/port)

