

# What You Need to Know About the Proposed Wilmington Harbor Expansion

*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed deepening and widening Wilmington Harbor, but this project carries serious risks for the Lower Cape Fear River, its wildlife, communities, and taxpayers.*

## What the Project Entails

- Deepen the channel from **44 to 49 feet at the river entrance** and **42 to 47 feet at the Port**.
- Widen sections of the channel by **100–300 feet**.
- Extend the entrance further offshore.
- Cost exceeds **\$1.3 billion**, with **\$14 million per year** in maintenance dredging.



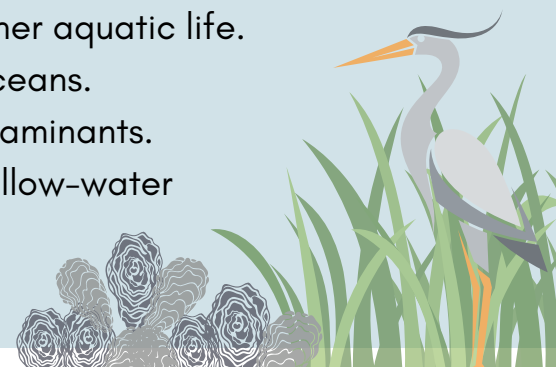
## Impacts on Communities and Taxpayers



- **High public costs with limited local benefit**; primary gains accrue to private shipping companies.
- **Increases flood and storm risk**, especially for vulnerable and low-income communities along the river.
- **Reduces natural flood protection** by destroying wetlands and tidal marshes.
- **Endangers public health** through contaminated sediment and degraded water quality.

## Impacts on Fisheries and Water Quality

- **Destroys over 1,000 acres of wetlands and estuarine habitat** that support shrimp, crabs, red drum, flounder, and snapper-grouper species.
- **Alters salinity and dissolved oxygen**, harming fish and other aquatic life.
- **Disrupts Primary Nursery Areas** for young fish and crustaceans.
- **Releases toxic sediments** containing PFAS and other contaminants.
- **Increases vessel traffic and wake energy**, damaging shallow-water habitats and raising risk of vessel strikes on marine life.



## Climate and Resilience Risks

- Deepening the channel **amplifies storm surge**, worsening flooding during hurricanes and extreme weather.
- The Draft EIS **underestimates long-term sea level rise and compound flooding risks**, leaving communities exposed.
- Loss of marshes and barrier islands reduces natural buffers that protect homes, businesses, and infrastructure.



## Environmental and Economic Trade-Offs

- The harbor already **accommodates large ships**; the expansion is not essential.
- Fisheries, recreational opportunities, and coastal tourism may suffer permanent damage.
- Shoreline erosion, wetland loss, and habitat degradation have **long-term economic and ecological costs**.

## Bottom Line

The Wilmington Harbor expansion threatens **wildlife, water quality, public health, and community resilience** - all at tremendous cost to taxpayers - without a demonstrated public need.

### What you can do:

- Speak up for the Cape Fear River.
- Submit a public comment to the Army Corps by **November 3**.
- Learn more: [nccoast.org/port](http://nccoast.org/port)

