



US Army Corps Of Engineers

Norfolk District

Media Advisory

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Corps, Commonwealth to sign agreement to deepen Hampton Roads Harbor inbound channel to 50 feet

What: Corps officials will join U.S. Senator John W. Warner; George Dunlop, Deputy Secretary of the Army; and the Virginia Port Authority to sign the federal Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) to deepen the inbound shipping channel in the Hampton Roads harbor to 50-feet.

When: The PCA signing ceremony will take place on Wednesday, April 23, at noon, in the offices of the Virginia Port Authority, located in the World Trade Center, Norfolk, Va. The signatories to the PCA are U.S. Senator John W. Warner; Deputy Secretary of the Army (Policy and Legislation), George S. Dunlop; Virginia Secretary of Transportation, Whittington W. Clement; J. Robert Bray, Executive Director of the Virginia Port Authority; and the COE Norfolk District Engineer, Col. David L. Hansen.

Construction schedule: The Corps' North Atlantic Division in New York approved the project study last November, establishing the federal interest in deepening the inbound channel in the Hampton Roads Harbor to 50-feet. The harbor's outbound channel depth is already at 50-feet. Approval of the study meant that the Norfolk District could move forward with construction two years ahead of schedule. The district is finalizing the project design and plans and specifications for project construction and a contract for dredging the Thimble Shoal portion of the project is scheduled for award in July, with construction expected to begin in August.

Dredging of the Norfolk Harbor and Atlantic Ocean portions of the project will follow. The project should be completed by October 2005. The estimated cost of the project, including landside improvements at the local marine terminals, is approximately \$37 million.

Significance: -- “This study approval and PCA signing tomorrow guarantees the continued competitiveness of the port and this deeper water means the biggest ships in the world can call on the Port of Hampton Roads,” said Col. David L. Hansen, Norfolk District Engineer. “And as we know, the port is vital to the economic vitality of the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as sister states in the U.S. Midwest.”

-- Approval means the project is justified based on the reduction in transportation costs resulting from the use of larger, more efficient container vessels operating in a deeper channel. Ideally, these cost savings are passed on to the American public in the form of lower prices for consumer goods.

-- Project two years ahead of schedule.

-- Study justifies depth of 50 feet inbound. The project is already at 50 feet outbound.

-- Leading world port – deepest natural harbor, world’s leader in coal and tobacco, second largest container port on the U.S. East Coast.

-- National security – located adjacent to Norfolk Naval Base, the Port of Hampton Roads served as one of the nation’s “strategic ports” for military rollout during *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

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