



## US Army Corps of Engineers

Norfolk District

### *Media Advisory*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Corps releases draft findings on the eastward expansion of the Craney Island Dredged Material Disposal Area

**What/When:** In a letter delivered to the Virginia Port Authority today, Corps officials advised of serious issues regarding proposed eastward expansion to accommodate port facility at Craney Island..

**Issues:**

- Current federal authority only allows federal participation with regard to navigation. Link to navigation is dredged disposal capacity. While there is no doubt that the state faces serious port capacity challenges, at present there would be only very limited Federal cost-sharing due to the small amount of increased dredged material capacity at Craney Island.
- Following recent exhaustive review and revalidation of recently approved 50-foot inbound Norfolk Harbor channel, it became clear that justification for 55-foot channel is not likely in foreseeable future.
- Without need for 55-foot channel deepening, there is no rapid filling requirement for a new cell.

- Because project as proposed extends 3,000 feet into the Elizabeth River, there are navigation and safety issues with eastward expansion that require independent technical review.
- Strengthening and raising westward berm to increase capacity is least cost alternative for long term disposal.
- Based on requirements currently identified by customers and users of the Port of Hampton Roads, the west berm would not need to be ready and in place until 2025 and could be built at 100 percent federal cost.
- To fill 580 acres at the mouth of the Elizabeth River would create significant environmental impact. Such an impact would require approximately \$84 million in mitigation provided the regulatory and environmental agencies could agree to mitigate.

**Background:** The study was authorized following a resolution adopted Sept. 24, 1997 by the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

It said to look at four things:

- Rapid filling to accommodate anticipated port expansion.
- Operation of the existing facility while extending the useful life of Craney Island
- Investigation of all relevant environmental issues.
- Subsequent transfer of the expanded area of Craney Island to the Commonwealth.

A Corps reconnaissance study was initiated in 1998, which identified federal interest in three areas:

- Increased dredged material disposal capacity.
- Growth and commodity movements and waterborne transportation savings.
- National defense

Congress authorized construction of the original Craney Island in 1946. Construction began in 1956 and was completed in 1958.

**Significance:** Stated Col. David L. Hansen, District Engineer for the Corps in Norfolk, “While there is not doubt that the state faces serious port capacity challenges, the

combined economic, environmental and engineering issues with regard to proposed eastward expansion for a port facility supported only very limited federal participation.”

**What happens next?**

-Draft feasibility report will be developed and forwarded to higher authority in the fall.

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