



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Wilmington District

Wilmington Harbor Improvements, NC (Navigation - Investigations)

- **Sponsor: State of North Carolina**
- **Feasibility-level study being conducted to address navigation inefficiencies**
- **FCSA executed in April 2012 and amended in June 2012**
- **Feasibility study being conducted under Corps transformation initiative**
- **Study scheduled for completion in March 2015, subject to the availability of funds**



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 7

DATE: 6 March 2014

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure study resolution dated 28 June 2006.
2. **LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED:** The Wilmington Harbor project, located at Wilmington on the southeastern coast of North Carolina, requires improvements to address navigation inefficiencies and safety issues being faced by navigation vessels currently calling on the Port of Wilmington. The existing depth of the navigation channel ranges from 42 to 44 feet. The current alignment of the entrance channel near Bald Head Island has proven susceptible to rapid and persistent shoaling. The Battery Island navigation channel turn is problematic for some container vessels under certain conditions of wind and tide. Finally, the limited width of the existing anchorage basin causes delays for larger vessels currently utilizing the harbor. A feasibility study to examine alternatives to improve these areas of the Wilmington Harbor project is currently underway. The study was initiated in April 2012 with the execution of a feasibility cost sharing agreement (FCSA) with the state of North Carolina and is scheduled for completion by March 2015, subject to the availability of funds.

Of the areas of concern discussed above, expanding the width of the anchorage basin has been determined to not be economically feasible. Also, adjusting the alignment of the entrance channel near Bald Head Island has been determined to be best accomplished using Operation and

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Maintenance funding. Only the modification of the navigation channel turn at Battery Island will likely be evaluated in detail as part of the feasibility study.

3. **COST ESTIMATE:** \$ 240,000 (100% Federal reconnaissance phase)
1,420,000 (Feasibility/Federal)
1,320,000 (Feasibility/Non-Federal)
\$2,980,000 Total

4. **FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION THRU FY 2013:** \$862,000.

5. **FY 2014 FUNDING ALLOCATION :** \$500,000. Funds are being used to identify a tentatively selected plan, complete the draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment, conduct public and agency reviews for the study and hold the agency decision meeting.

6. **FY 2015 BUDGET AMOUNT:** \$298,000. These funds would be used to complete the final report following the agency decision meeting and continue the study through the Civil Works Review Board and Chief's Report stages including submittal to OMB.

7. **KEY DATES:** Approved 905(b) analysis – April 2011
Completed the reconnaissance phase – April 2012
Complete feasibility phase – March 2015, subject to the availability of funds

8. **OTHER INFORMATION:** In accordance with the FY 2006 Wilmington Harbor Improvements study resolution, the Corps of Engineers began a 905(b) analysis in FY 2009 focusing on extending the navigation channel to provide vessel access to 600 acres of property owned by the North Carolina State Ports Authority (NCSPA), commonly referred to as the proposed North Carolina International Terminal (NCIT). The NCSPA envisioned a new terminal to be the best means to accommodate larger and more efficient vessels that would be in service once the Panama Canal expansion program was completed in 2014. The state of North Carolina provided a letter of intent to accompany the 905(b) analysis on 7 December 2010 expressing their desire to cease further studies supporting NCIT and fully evaluate navigational safety issues related to the existing channel. The immediate challenges of safe navigation supporting its existing port facilities include: rate of shoaling of the entrance channel within the Baldhead Shoal channel reach, vessel maneuverability of the Battery Island turn, and the current turning basin. These current areas of concern were recommended to be evaluated further in detailed feasibility studies in the approved 905(b) analysis dated April 2011.