



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**
- **Feasibility study scheduled for completion in July 2015**
- **Design and construction to be implemented under the project's operation and maintenance authority.**



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 7

DATE: 23 February 2015

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure study resolution dated 28 June 2006.
2. **LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED:** The Wilmington Harbor Improvements project, located at Wilmington on the southeastern coast of North Carolina, requires improvements to address navigation inefficiencies being faced by navigation vessels currently calling on the port of Wilmington. The current alignment of the entrance channel near Bald Head Island could be shifted toward deeper water for a one-time cost savings. 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. Therefore, the Corps has determined that both the entrance channel and Battery Island turn recommendations will be implemented under the authority of the Wilmington Harbor project using operations and maintenance funds.

Project Information – Wilmington Harbor Improvements, NC (Navigation - Investigations) –  
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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 2014:** \$1,362,000.
  
5. **FY 2015 FUNDING ALLOCATION:** \$20,000. Including carry-in, these funds are being used to complete the final feasibility report scheduled to be approved by the Corps' South Atlantic Division Commander.
  
6. **FY 2016 BUDGET AMOUNT:** \$0.
  
7. **KEY DATES:** Complete feasibility phase- July 2015  
   Initiate design, under O&M, 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 entrance channel and Battery Island features were recommended for implementation. The anchorage basin improvements had a benefit to cost ratio below 1.0 and therefore are not being recommended in the final plan.

Furthermore, the port has recently requested that the Corps look at the feasibility of deepening Wilmington Harbor including the anchorage basin, which would require a new feasibility study start. The earliest this study could be recommended for funding would be the FY 2017 budget.