

CONNECTICUT MARITIME COALITION



**Testimony of Connecticut Maritime Coalition, Inc.
Environmental Committee Public Hearing: S.B. No. 78 (Raised) AN ACT
CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION OF DREDGED MATERIALS FROM CERTAIN
HARBORS AND PORTS ON LONG ISLAND SOUND**

February 19, 2016

Chairman Kennedy and Chairman Albis, thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's public hearing on S.B. No. 78 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION OF DREDGED MATERIALS FROM CERTAIN HARBORS AND PORTS ON LONG ISLAND SOUND.

By way of background, the CMC, organized in 1999, represents Connecticut's deep-water port businesses. We know that commercial port viability, efficiency and market share is dependent on shipping channels that are dredged to accommodate 35 foot vessel keel depths. Commercial vessels that call on Connecticut's ports carry oil, gasoline, steel, lumber, road salt, and scrap metal. Virtually all the gasoline you have pumped into your car or the heating oil used in your home entered the state through one of Connecticut's deep-water ports. Ninety percent of the commercial vessel traffic that enters LIS will end up at a Connecticut deep-water port. Connecticut is also homeport to several squadrons of deep-draft U.S. Navy submarines. For that reason, the Thames River in New London is dredged to 45 feet.

The LIS DMMP, initiated in 2007, was a multi-year scientific process that developed procedures and standards for the placement and beneficial use of dredged materials. CMC was one of numerous federal, municipal, commercial and environmental stakeholders, both from New York and Connecticut, involved in the DMMP process. The procedures and standards developed by the DMMP were recently incorporated into federal regulations and supported by the Connecticut Federal Delegation.

Currently there are four open water sites in LIS that receive dredged materials. These sites have undergone rigorous study as part of the 2004 Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the Central and Western Sites, and the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Study (SEIS) covering the eastern sites. The EIS/SEIS included benthic and marine environments, physical oceanography, and sediment chemistry, to name a few. **These studies concluded that the open water sites were well suited for placement of suitable dredged materials with no long term adverse impacts to the environment.**

Based on the conclusions of the EIS/SEIS and completion of the LIS DMMP, we suggest that the Proposed SB 78 language is unnecessary and departs from the USACE least cost environmentally sound disposal methods, creates significant additional costs to dredge, eliminates ocean disposal options, and makes Connecticut less competitive for shrinking federal dredging funds.

The State's 2010 Connecticut Maritime Economic Impact Study indicated a 1:9 ratio of return on dredging investment. Further infrastructure improvements to Connecticut's deep-water ports of New Haven, Bridgeport and New London are fundamental to growing present and future maritime business, as well as lending to the removal of truck traffic from Interstate 95.

Connecticut's three deep water ports are extraordinary and uniquely valuable assets, and the time has come to seriously use these assets to advance economic growth and job creation, for the benefit of all the people of the State of Connecticut.

We strongly urge the Committee to reject S.B. No.78.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Gash', is written over the printed name.

William Gash
Executive Director