

February 28, 2011

The Honorable Senator Thomas R. Carper
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Carper:

The Greater Seaford Chamber of Commerce requests your support of appropriation to the USACE Baltimore District to complete dredging of the Nanticoke River in Sussex County, Delaware. The project provides for a channel 12 feet deep and 100 feet wide in the Nanticoke River to Seaford, DE, with a turning basin 9 feet deep. The Nanticoke River was last dredged twenty years ago.

In May of 2010, Sussex County Council, the local non-federal sponsor, approved the purchase of an appropriate site for excess dredge material. The Corps indicated that \$160,000 has been allocated for in FY11 for Engineering and Design for the dredging project

The Nanticoke River provides access to the Seaford area and serves fuel barge traffic to the Vienna, Md., power plant, according to the Corps. According to the Delmarva Water Transport Committee, it would take approximately 150 tractor trailer trucks to replace one barge. Over two thousand tractor trailer trucks would be needed per day or over one hundred thousand annually to transport the same product.

By completing the dredging project, the poultry industry says it would allow local farmers to bring in crop at higher volumes and enhance transport of grain and grain products to Delmarva. They also say that if the river should become un-navigable for barges, it would increase the cost to the poultry industry as a whole negatively affecting the local farmer as it pertains to his business.

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The local agricultural industry says that 60,000 tons of dry and liquid fertilizer materials are brought up the Nanticoke River annually supporting more than a dozen retail facilities across Sussex County.

The petroleum industry says that rail is not an alternative as refineries are not currently equipped to ship petroleum products by rail, terminals are not equipped to receive by rail, there is no pipeline and trucks cannot haul fuel through the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel.

The tourism industry states that recreational boat traffic on the river is steady and normally originates in the Seaford area and heads south. Two area boat launch access sites – Phillips Landing and Seaford – provide year-round direct access to the Nanticoke River. Each site has multiple ramps, portable toilets, and parking. A single, soft landing is located at the Seaford Canoe Launch. A floating ramp for access and temporary dockage is available at the Seaford River Walk. Fishing access is located at the River Walk and River Park in Seaford and at Phillips Landing. Picnic facilities are found at River Park, Phillips Landing and Blades Marina. Shared-use trails for hikers and equestrians are located in the Nanticoke Wildlife Area.

Across the river from Seaford is the town of Blades, host to the Nanticoke River Marina. This is the only recreational marina on this stretch of the river and is open Thursday through Sunday from 8 am to 5 pm during boating season, and currently offers limited services to the general public

From agriculture to tourism, the Nanticoke River provides waterborne commerce and an outlet to the Chesapeake Bay for recreational activities. The River has a huge impact on the economy of the entire area.

We realize there is fierce national competition for dredging projects. Your valued support would be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Paula K. Gunson
Executive Director