



## N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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### **Long-term dredging agreement will help N.C.'s coastal economy, transportation and other services**

**RALEIGH** – State and federal officials have finalized an agreement to again allow dredging in North Carolina's coastal waters so fishing and transportation vessels can more easily move through shallow inlets and channels.

“This agreement is critical to keeping our shallow-draft navigation channels navigable,” said Tom Reeder, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources. “Our state is heavily dependent upon these channels for the operation of our commercial and charter fishing fleets, N.C. Department of Transportation ferries and recreational boat traffic. The continued maintenance of these channels is vital to North Carolina's coastal economy.”

The agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the continued maintenance dredging of North Carolina's federally authorized shallow-draft inlets and channels was finalized in mid-November. It runs through September 2017.

Due to reductions in federal funds during the last several years, the state's shallow-draft navigation channels have not been maintained to authorized depths and dimensions. In March 2012, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources started developing a long-term memorandum of agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to remedy the problem.

“Maintaining the navigability of the shallow-draft inlets allows the state's commercial, charter and recreational fishing fleet the access it requires to the Atlantic Ocean,” said Stephen Baker, colonel of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Wilmington district. “Maintaining the federal channels used by the state's ferry vessels allows those vessels to continue predictable operations, particularly to those islands of Ocracoke and Hatteras, for which the ferries serve as a major artery for emergency response, services and commerce.”

In support of the agreement, the North Carolina General Assembly created the Shallow Draft Navigation Channel and Lake Dredging fund during the 2013 session. Money from this fund will be used to provide 50 percent of the cost for dredging projects authorized under the agreement. Local governments will be responsible for providing the remaining 50 percent of the cost for a project they wish to sponsor.

To see the agreement, go to [http://www.nwater.org/files/grants/Long\\_Term\\_MOA\\_NC\\_USACE.pdf](http://www.nwater.org/files/grants/Long_Term_MOA_NC_USACE.pdf).

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