



January 22, 2010

Governor Chris Christie
The State House
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie,

The South Jersey Bayshore Coalition, a collective of environmental and cultural organizations that seek to preserve the cultural and natural heritage in New Jersey's Delaware Bayshore region, opposes the proposed deepening of the Delaware River project.

We are aware of your public statements against this project to date, and we applaud them.

We stand behind you in staying the course in pursuit of the litigation that will require the Army Corps to comply with New Jersey and federal law as it applies to the Deepening. Unfortunately, the Army Corps' effort to sidestep state and Federal laws in pursuing this project sets a dangerous precedent for our state and region that must be vigorously opposed and defeated. We also urge you and your administration to address the full array of legal remedies identified by our environmental colleagues in their legal filings.

Please grant your Attorney General all the resources and support needed to pursue the strongest case possible against the Deepening project.

As you know, for years agencies and environmental experts, relying on sound scientific principles, have documented the depth and breadth of the threats that deepening the Delaware River poses. The South Jersey Bayshore Coalition is in agreement that these threats are of such a magnitude, and the benefits so few, that the deepening effort should be dropped.

Environmental, health and safety concerns have been raised by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Delaware River Basin Commission, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Delaware's Sea Grant Program, and more.

The claims of jobs being created by the project have never been documented. The economic benefits being claimed for the project, which would be in the form of increased efficiencies rather than more goods coming up the River, have never been documented. Even the Army Corps acknowledges the same volume of goods would be shipped, but in fewer vessels. This strongly suggests that the deepening would not create jobs.

Under the current proposal, over 80% of the spoils would come to New Jersey communities. Spoils are proposed to go into the existing confined disposal facilities (CDFs) in the NJ towns of National Park, Pedricktown, Pennsville, Oldmans, and Lower Alloways Creek. In order to accommodate the spoils from the deepening, the size of the facilities and the piles of spoils they contain would have to grow – and grow more than those communities were ever led to believe when they became hosts. Rather than CDFs with dikes 50 feet high, communities would host CDFs with dikes ranging from 60 to 94 feet high.

The community, engineering and environmental ramifications of these dike raisings have yet to be subject to Army Corps, State, other Agency, expert or public review and comment.

The deepening project threatens the drinking water supplies for NJ. It would also damage the wetlands that provide stormwater protection for communities and the great variety of commercially and recreationally valued fish, because it would reintroduce toxins and damage critical species habitat. In doing so, it would also damage the ecotourism business that is so essential for Southern New Jersey. Those locally-based economies include fishing, hunting and wildlife watching – all of which depend upon clean water and healthy ecosystems.

As indicated at the beginning of this letter, the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition is committed to preserving southern New Jersey's cultural and natural heritage. We look forward to working with you and your team.

Respectfully Yours,

Sandy Batty, Executive Director
Association of NJ Environmental
Commissions (ANJEC)

Tim Dillingham, Executive Director
American Littoral Society

Jane Morton Galetto, President
Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River
and Its Tributaries, Inc.

Margaret O'Gorman, Executive Director
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Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware
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Amy Goldsmith, Director
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Kelly Mooij, Dir. of Government Relations
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Christine Nolan, Director
South Jersey Land and Water Trust