

# Deep Water Port *notes*

The News Portfolio of The Connecticut Deep Water Port Community

*New London . New Haven . Bridgeport*

## Maritime Matters in Washington

by Mr. Paul Bea



*M/V CMB Weihai (name is city in China where ship was built) LOA 590 ft, DWT 43,120 tons. Outbound from Gateway Terminal, New Haven after discharging a cargo of road salt to be used next winter on Connecticut roadways.*

*Photo – Captain Charles Jonas, Connecticut Marine Pilot*

CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE—with each other and themselves—over what is a politically workable solution to the Federal deficit. Some legislators still think that the problem isn't on the spending side but most recognize that the disparity between Federal revenue and expenditure must be addressed. Cuts are on the way.

So while some bills are getting action on the House and Senate floors most major measures are stalled until key decisions are made: how much to cut from discretionary spending, the extent to which structural, mandatory spending in programs like Medicare should also be reduced and, a Hamlet question, “to tax or not to tax.” Aye, there's the rub!

*Continued on page 2*

Why bother mentioning all that before getting down to maritime matters? Because no spending decisions will be made and signed into law without the larger budget framework in place. And because, unfortunately, there is nothing mandatory—to use the operative word—about maritime programs and transportation infrastructure investment. Most everything is on the table.

To the extent that Congress puts a priority on finding savings in discretionary spending (mostly non-defense programs) it puts pressure on those programs that States, localities and public authorities have relied on to get roads, ramps and other infrastructure built. It keeps a lid on US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) civil works spending for things like navigation channels.

As this is written there are positive signs of compromises in the making. Whether one will include revenues (and not just cuts) could make a trillion dollar difference in how severe the cuts will be. Now, with that happy talk out of the way there are a few things of interest to note.

The House approved a \$30.6 billion Energy & Water Development Appropriations for the coming FY 2012, and includes **USACE navigation funding**. All told the bill is \$5.9 billion less than the president's budget and takes the total spending level back to FY 2006. USACE funding could have done worse. O&M for coastal navigation infrastructure is \$758 million. The only coastal port construction projects funded in the bill are for the ports of Stockton, CA, and New York/New Jersey, the latter being the 50-foot deepening project. Those were lucky to be in the president's budget and therefore are not considered earmarks, now verboten in Congress. Successful amendments to the bill were generally of the cutting kind and the one amendment of potentially greatest value to the maritime community was destined to fail on a technicality. Nevertheless, Connecticut's Joe Courtney (D-2<sup>nd</sup>) attempted to add \$808 million for seaport channel maintenance, pointing to the fact that only 50 percent of the anticipated Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenue would be used in the bill.

That issue of wasting **Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund** (HMTF) money is gaining attention on Capitol Hill. The user fee is collected primarily on imports and domestic cargo moves but roughly half is not being spent for the intended purpose of maintaining Federal channels in US seaports. Rep. Courtney is one of over 100 House co-sponsors of HR 104, a bill to address this chronic problem that leaves many ports and intra-coastal waterways less than fully maintained. Others of the Connecticut congressional delegation who are

sponsors are Rosa DeLauro (D-3<sup>rd</sup>), Chris Murphy (D-5<sup>th</sup>), Jim Himes (D-4<sup>th</sup>) and the State's two senators who have co-sponsored an identical bill, S. 412.

The HMTF issue also has a strong supporter in Chairman John Mica (R-FL) of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. The Jacksonville area congressman has an interest in all the modes and as if to prove the point he announced plans to introduce **a surface transportation bill** to include a modest maritime related section. Early in July he released highlights of the planned bill—technically the SAFETEA-LU reauthorization bill. You can find it here: <http://bit.ly/p5K3tf>. For the first time the former “highway bill” will include sections like expediting dredging projects and Corps permits, encouraging marine highway development, and fixing the HMTF problem. The devil, as they say, will be in the details when the bill text is released but we will take this as a good development in a month that hasn't had much good news.

*Mr. Paul Bea is a government relations and policy advisor in Washington, DC. He chairs the marine highway advocacy group, The Coastwise Coalition, and discusses marine transportation system matters at [www.MTSMatters.com](http://www.MTSMatters.com).*

## **Statewide Dredging Update**

**by Mr. Joseph R. Salvatore, Dredging Project Coordinator for the State of Connecticut, [Joseph.Salvatore@ct.gov](mailto:Joseph.Salvatore@ct.gov)**

### **Long Island Sound Innovative Treatment Demonstration Project-Final Phase**

The purpose of this project is to determine the feasibility of innovative treatment technologies for the treatment of dredge material from Long Island Sound so the material could meet CTDEEP unrestricted use criteria which would allow the material to be used in a beneficial and marketable manner. Phase 1 of the project consisted of a demonstration using material physically and chemically similar to that commonly generated in the maintenance of Long Island Sound ports (Bridgeport Harbor in particular). The dredge material had undergone an initial treatment as part of a pilot demonstration project undertaken by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation under a USEPA innovative treatment of dredge material program.

Approximately 100 cubic yards of dredge sediment material that was treated in a soil washing process was stored at the Bridgeport Port Authority (BPA) facility (project sponsor). After the initial soil washing process performed in New Jersey, the treated sediment still did

not meet the Connecticut standards for unrestricted use. Staff from the CTDEEP Office of Long Island Sound Programs and the Solid Waste Division designed a blend using a ratio of sand to dredge sediment to come up with a passable topsoil blend. After final blending the material was tested and determined to be suitable for upland unrestricted use for cover material at a local landfill site that wasn't properly closed several years ago. The final aspect of the demonstration is to monitor the blended soil in place for grass growth, and a final report on the cost associated with this demonstration project to treat dredge material for upland beneficial unrestricted use. I will provide this final data in a future DWPN.

**Currituck Update:** The Army Corps dredge completed work in the Patchogue River and Clinton Harbor this past June. A estimated total of 20,000 c.y. was dredged and disposed of at a near shore site off of Hammonasset State Park beach for nourishment.

On July 8<sup>th</sup> the State Bond Commission passed Item No. 37 which contained a General Obligation Allocation of \$750,000 grant-in-aid to the Town of Westbrook for dredging of the Patchogue River. The allocation was sponsored by State Senator Eileen Daley. In addition to Senator Daley's request, U.S Congressman Joe Courtney is advocating for the re-programming of \$680,000 of surplus funds from a completed U.S. Army Corps federal project for the Patchogue River dredge project scheduled for the 2012-13 dredge season.

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4

## Deep Water Port *notes*

### In this issue: Maritime Matters in Washington

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