

## **Connecticut Maritime Commission Annual Report 2009**

The Connecticut Maritime Commission (CTMC) was established in July 2004 by State Statute (TITLE 13b CHAPTER 242\* Section 13b-51a) as the successor agency to the Connecticut Port Authority. The CTMC consists of fifteen members representing five State agencies, the maritime business industry, local port authorities, port operators, marine passenger services, port labor unions, recreational marine services and the coastal communities. The State agencies are represented by the Commissioners of the Departments of Transportation (DOT), Economic and Community Development (DECD) and Environmental Protection (DEP), the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the Chairman of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) or their respective designees. The remaining members of the CTMC are appointed as follows: four members appointed by the Governor; one member each appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the majority leader of the House of Representatives and the minority leader of the House of Representatives. All appointed members serve for terms coterminous with their appointing authority and until their successor is appointed and has qualified. Vacancies on the CTMC are filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as original appointments. The chairman of the CTMC is selected by the Governor from among the appointed members of the Commission. The commission may elect a vice chairman, secretary and such other officers as it deems proper. Members receive no compensation for the performance of their duties.

In accordance with TITLE 13b CHAPTER 242\* Section 13b-51a.(f) of the Connecticut General Statutes, on or before January 1<sup>st</sup>, the CTMC is to submit an annual report to the Commissioner of Transportation, the Governor and the Transportation Strategy Board. The report is to provide: (1) a list of projects which, if undertaken by the state, would support the state's maritime policy and encourage maritime commerce and industry; (2) recommendations for improvements to existing maritime policies, programs and facilities; and (3) such other recommendations as it considers appropriate. Copies of the report are to be submitted to the General Assembly as well.

During calendar year 2009, the CTMC met monthly on the third Wednesday of each month at four different locations throughout the State on a rotating basis (Newington, New London, North Haven and Bridgeport). The annual schedule of the CTMC meetings and the minutes of meetings held were made available to the general public by being posted on the CONNDOT webpage ([www.ct.gov/dot](http://www.ct.gov/dot)) under "About Us" and then "Commissions".

Membership of the CTMC changed slightly during the year. In March 2009, Linda Krause was appointed by Governor Rell to succeed Martin Toyen as a member of the Commission. In April 2009, Joseph Riccio, formerly the elected Vice Chairman, was appointed by Governor Rell to succeed Martin Toyen as Chairman. In May 2009, John Johnson was elected as the Vice Chairman. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management not yet appointed a designee to the CTMC or personally attend a meeting.

The Maritime Policy for the State of Connecticut developed in December 2005 and approved by the Governor's office in 2006 without comment continued to serve as the cornerstone of issues addressed by the CTMC during calendar year 2009. Maintenance dredging of the state's waterways and the associated economic impact remained the top issues throughout 2009. In 2008, the CT Departments of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Environmental Protection (DEP), Transportation (DOT) and the Office to Policy and Management (OPM) initiated legislation to provide funding for a Deep Draft Port Study. However, the legislation failed to be passed by the 2008 session of the CT Legislature. There were no reported actions on the Deep Draft Port Study initiative by the state agencies during 2009. The need to develop a CT Deep Draft Port Study/Strategy was driven by predictions of both a doubling in container cargo by the year 2020 as well as moves to create freight corridors including use of the Maritime Highway.

As a means of keeping current on maritime issues around the state, the CTMC entertained presentations from harbor management commissions, port authorities and maritime organizations during the year. Presentations were made by the following: City of New London, New Haven Port Authority, Connecticut Maritime Coalition, Nature Conservancy, Bridgeport Port Authority, NRG, the Bridgeport-Port Jefferson Steamship Company, the Cruise Ship Task Force, Department of Environmental Protection, City of Bridgeport, Department of Economic and Community Development and the Environmental Peer Auditing program. Additionally, updates on the Long Island Sound Area Maritime Security Committee (LIS AMSC) and the Long Island Sound Harbor Safety Committee (LIS HSC) were routinely provided by representatives from U.S. Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound. Issues presented included port security grants, the Transportation Workers Identification Credential (TWIC) card project, heavy weather plans, the establishment of anchorage and lightering zones, and an impending port access review study for Block Island Sound.

Throughout the year, the CTMC continued to press for federal and state funding for maritime infrastructure improvement projects, specifically dredging projects. CTMC leadership met with the local staff members of the Connecticut Congressional Delegation (CODEL) to discuss dredge project funding needs. The CTMC also made inquiries to various state legislators about funding the Harbor Improvement Account that was established by legislative action during the 2008 session.

The New England Division of the Army Corps of Engineers routinely provided updates on the development of the Long Island Sound Dredge Material Management Plan (LIS DMMP) as well as the Connecticut dredging project such as Bridgeport Harbor, North Cove and Norwalk. If an LIS DMMP is not in place by June 2013, both the Western LIS and Central LIS disposal sites will be closed. Congress provided \$3.25M towards the LIS DMMP development to the ACOE in FY 2008 and another \$1M the FY 2009 appropriation and \$2.89M in the FY 2010 budget. The total estimated cost of the LIS DMMP is approximately \$12M. Part of the LIS DMMP process involved the distribution of a questionnaire to determine the dredging needs of the state. A survey distributed in conjunction with a former Economic Impact Study (EIS) had only received a 20% return rate. The return rate on the current questionnaire completed in 2009 was 62.7%. Based on preliminary review CT will need on average 500,000 cubic yards of mostly mud type material dredged each year for the next 30 years. In conjunction with determining Connecticut's dredging needs, the Connecticut Maritime Coalition (CMC) engaged a consultant to determine the economic impact of the marine related industries on the state's gross state product. Preliminary report is that the maritime industry contributes \$5B to the state's economy.

The House of Representatives introduced a Bill as part of the "stimulus package" that provided \$4.5 billion to the ACOE in the long delayed FY 2009 federal budget; \$2.0B for construction projects and \$2.5 B for Operations and Maintenance. The CTMC was informed that the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), an environmental organization, had submitted a letter dated December 22, 2008 to Congressman Israel (D-NY) and Congressman Shays (R-CT) that provided an extensive list of projects that should be considered under the FY 2009 stimulus package as an investment in Long Island Sound. Among the projects were several "shovel ready" dredging projects that had been provided to the CAC by the CTMC upon request. Unfortunately, none of the shovel ready dredging projects in Connecticut were selected for funding. In fact, only one dredging project in all of New England received stimulus funding.

By the end of February 2009, approximately 200,000 cubic yards of dredge material was removed from Norwalk Harbor and deposited at Central Long Island Sound (CLIS) disposal site. Approximately 180,000 cubic yards of material was removed from North Cove in Old Saybrook by the end of March 2009. Both received federal funding; Norwalk \$5.609M and North Cove \$4.33M. Approximately 85,000 of the 180,000 cubic yards of material were transported to Cornfield Shoal Disposal Site (CSDS). The remaining 75,000 cubic yards of material were transported to the Central Long Island Sound Disposal Site (CLIS) and used as capping material for the Norwalk and other private and municipal dredging projects. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection provided \$1M in bonded money to pay the difference in transportation cost of the North Cove material between CSDS and CLIS. Coordination among the CTMC, the Department of Transportation's Dredging Project Coordinator, the ACOE, the Department of Environmental Protection and the local project coordinators, allowed for 19 of 21 small municipal and private dredging projects requiring capping material to be completed during the 2008-2009 winter dredging season.

In March 2009, the Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Governor and legislative leaders in support of proposed legislation to create a Bi-State Long Island Sound Commission. The letter also recommended a CTMC seat on the new Bi-State LIS Commission.

In April 2009, the CTMC sent a letter to the CTDEP and the ACOE requesting that they require Amtrak to dredge materials from the CT River needed to rebuild the groin as part of the Niantic River Railroad bridge replacement project. The alternative is to truck more than 65,000 cubic yards of material over local highways. The CTMC letters were forwarded to the respective public notification dockets in September. Also in April, the CTMC created an "attendance policy" as a step towards obtaining better attendance of Commissioners at the monthly meetings.

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) is the sponsor for the Maritime Highway program. The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) is pressing Congress for a freight study and federal funding for projects that will relieve current and anticipated freight choke points (such as CT) along identified freight corridors. Better cooperation among the New England states relative to the movement of freight has been identified as an issue. In June 2009, the CTMC provided a letter to the Maritime Corridor docket recommending that Connecticut ports be considered as part of the Northeast Marine Corridor of the Maritime Highway.

In July 2009 USN Submarine Base Groton publicly advertised intent to commence construction of a contained aquatic disposal (CAD) cell in the Thames River on September 15th as part of the dredging project at the USN Base docks. Other marine interests in the New London area have dredging projects that could benefit from the Navy project material to serve as a cap. Unfortunately, a coastal zone consistency review by the State of NY disapproved the USN plan to dispose of clean material at the New London Disposal Site (NLDS). Thus, not only is the USN project in jeopardy but also the aforementioned nine private projects as well. The action taken by NY essentially closes the New London Disposal Site (NLDS) two years earlier than its scheduled 2011 close. The NY action also highlighted the need for the Environmental Protection Agency to fund and complete an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for designating an Eastern Long Island Sound (ELIS) dredge material disposal site as soon as possible.

CTMC leadership held a meeting on September 16, 2009 with staff members of the CT Congressional Delegation (CODEL). CTMC leadership presented a list of priority dredging projects that needed federal funding. The CODEL staff members were very knowledgeable on dredging issues. The federal funding needs for CT dredging related projects for FY 2010 were discussed. There had also been a discussion on the need to fund EPA to conduct the Environmental Impact Study for Eastern LIS. The CODEL staff provided information on the dubious nature of the FY 2010 federal budget. CTMC leadership advised that the CTMC had taken on the roll of coordinating the states dredging needs and vetting/prioritizing them for consideration by CONNDOT and the ACOE. The CODEL staff was offered to use the CTMC as a coordination tool in meeting constituents' requests for dredging project funding within their respective principal's district. The use of funds already available in the Harbor Maintenance Tax Fund was raised and discussed. A draft of a letter authorized by the CTMC to be signed by the Chairman and sent CT CODEL requesting federal appropriations for specific CT projects was shared with the CODEL staff as a courtesy. The letter was signed and sent on September 16, 2009.

The Governor's office released the DECD prepared Connecticut Economic Strategic Plan (ESP) on September 15, 2009. The ESP contained a recommendation to create a statewide port authority that would include some but not all of the state's airports and only the three deep draft ports.

The CTMC discussed support for the reinstatement of the New Haven Waterfront Street Reconstruction project on the priority list to the CTDOT Commissioner. CTDOT had recently notified the New Haven Port Authority (NHPA) that there was insufficient funding to complete the project for the unforeseeable future. The project had been scheduled for final work in 2009 as a result of a plan started over 10 years ago as part of the Q Bridge replacement project. The City of New Haven had paid for the design. The NHPA sent a letter to the CTDOT Commissioner on 12 August 2009, asking for the project to be submitted for TIGER Grant funding. NHPA submitted its own TIGER Grant application prior to the September 15, 2009 application deadline.

The CTMC sent a letter dated November 2, 2009 to the Governor calling for better funding for the CT Cruise Ship Task Force to assist in resurrecting what had been a burgeoning cruise ship visit schedule to New London. The CTMC sent a letter dated November 4, 2009 to CTDEP asking that the science behind the limits on the dredging window be provided. Additionally, the letter asked that a DEP representative provide a presentation on the science behind the dredging window to the CTMC at a future meeting targeting the January 2010 meeting.

Gentrification of the CT waterfront and the economic impact that could result remained an important topic in 2009. Specifically, a concern about the rumored sale and development of the Coastline property in Bridgeport, formerly known as the CILCO Terminal, was followed and discussed. The collective opinion of the CTMC is that the loss of the commercial cargo deep water facility in Bridgeport would not be in the strategic interest of the state. At the November 18, 2009 CTMC meeting, the CTDEP provided a presentation on the Coastal Zone Management waterfront development application review process. The City of Bridgeport provided a presentation on the City's waterfront development plan. Part of the City's presentation was a justification for converting part of the Bridgeport Regional Maritime Complex from a commercial water dependent use to a mixed commercial/retail water related use known as Seaview Plaza.

Although all of the CTMC meetings are open to the public, the 2009 Annual Meeting of the CTMC required to be held in accordance with CGS Sec. 13b-51a (e) was held on December 16, 2009. In attendance were State agency leaders Commissioner Marie (DOT), Commissioner Marrella (DEP) and Commissioner McDonald (DECD). A review of the ongoing dredging projects in the state was provided by representatives from the New England District of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The total cost for all of the Connecticut dredging projects being carried by the ACOE is approximately \$104.3M. It was stated that the New England District of the ACOE gets approximately \$40M per year for navigation projects of all types, dredging and non-dredging. Commissioner McDonald provided a presentation on the Statewide Economic Strategic Plan (ESP). The ESP calls for creation of a statewide port authority fashioned after the current local port authorities.

The CTMC calendar year 2010 meeting schedule was established and posted on the CONNDOT web page (<http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=2314&q=307038> ). The 2010 monthly meetings will be held at 0930 on the third Wednesday of each month at four different locations around the state (Newington, New London, New Haven and Bridgeport) to better facilitate public participation.

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