

CUSTOMS BROKERS & FREIGHT FORWARDERS ASSOCIATION of Charleston, S.C., Inc.

P.O. BOX 20578 • CHARLESTON, S.C. 29413



Position Paper – Port Expansion

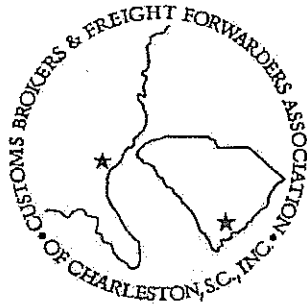
Support for New Navy Base Terminal, Study Needed on Jasper Project

The Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association of Charleston believes that port development at the former Charleston Navy Base is absolutely essential to the future economic health of our region, our state and the area maritime industry.

Construction of a new terminal in Jasper County, either by public or private entities, is no substitute for the need for new port capacity in Charleston. Also, the Jasper project must be carefully planned and structured to ensure positive economic benefits accrue to South Carolina.

Every state and federal environmental permitting agency has signed off on port development at the former Charleston Navy Base, issuing all necessary permits for both the terminal and the Port Access Road. This project should be the immediate focus of South Carolina and our elected officials. Sensible public policy dictates that you develop nearest to existing public infrastructure, including roads and utilities. Such infrastructure exists at or near the site of the former Navy Base, so this is an appropriate use of the Brownfield site.

While there is very little to no public infrastructure in close proximity to the proposed port site on the Savannah River in Jasper County, the site may have merit for a port terminal in the future. Therefore, the project should be studied further to determine the feasibility, timing of market need, environmental impacts, transportation issues and federal easements. The structure of any future cooperation between the states must ensure that South Carolina taxpayer dollars are not committed for the benefit of business interests in Georgia. In addition, channel deepening to the Jasper port terminal site should be considered as an alternative in the Savannah River deepening environmental impact statement.



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The future development of the Port of Charleston will require upgrades and maintenance of the infrastructure, not solely of the turning basins which need to be enlarged and the ongoing maintenance dredging, but also of the landside links with rail and highways. The continued growth in the region's population will cause even more congestion issues for port-related traffic, especially when the inland distribution centers begin operation. There needs to be a dedicated funding stream for waterway and landside infrastructure maintenance and improvements. With approximately three-quarters of a billion dollars in Customs duties and fees alone collected in Charleston it only makes sense for some of that to be reinvested what generates that revenue.

As one of the designated National Strategic Ports, Charleston along with the other strategic ports should be ranked higher in priority for waterway and landside infrastructure needs. It should also be consider a Tier One level port for the purposes of port security grant funding, not a Tier Two.

On 1 October 2009 (FY-10) Project SeaHawk will be transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department of Homeland Security as required by the SAFE Port Act. This date coincides with the full expenditure of the allotted Congressional funds to the SeaHawk project. It is imperative that the Department of Homeland Security full fund the continued operation of Seahawk which is designated as the model for the integrated operations centers required under the SAFE Port Act. Without the full funding and support of the department, SeaHawk will not be able to fulfill its mission as capably as it has done to date.