



News From Congressman Bill Delahunt

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DELAHUNT ANNOUNCES HOUSE APPROVAL FOR COASTAL NAVIGATION PROJECTS

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Bill Delahunt announced today that the U.S. House of Representatives has approved funding for a number of important coastal navigation projects along the South Shore and on the Cape and Islands.

"The maintenance of our coastal harbors and waterways is essential to the economic livelihood of our region," said Delahunt, an advocate for federal funds to dredge coastal waterways.

The Water and Energy Appropriations Bill that passed the House last week includes \$250,000 to dredge the entrance channel to Sesuit Harbor in Dennis, \$400,000 to dredge Aunt Lydia's Cove in Chatham and \$2,000,000 for harbor improvements in Green Harbor, Marshfield. Most of the Commonwealth's inshore fishing fleet works out of Aunt Lydia's Cove and Green Harbor and shoaling has been an ongoing concern for local officials and fishermen in these two communities.

In addition to these projects, the House Appropriations Committee approved a separate request by Delahunt for \$100,000 to develop plans for dredging a new berthing area for the R/V BIGELOW. Delahunt has been working with Senators Kennedy and Kerry to secure funds for dredging and to convince the Bush Administration to home port this new state of the art fisheries research vessel in Woods Hole.

It is expected that the Senate will take up both these measures later on this summer. If approved by the U.S. Senate, work on these projects would begin in early 2008.

"Maintaining our ports and harbors is important for our economy and marine environment," Delahunt said. "It's a matter of life or death – for the commercial fishing fleet, tourist economy, or mariners waiting for Coast Guard search and rescue."

Also awaiting final action is a related initiative co-authored by Delahunt to make it easier for the Army Corps of Engineers to dredge small coastal harbors. That proposal, which ends the use of cargo tonnage to calculate cost-benefits for projects, was approved and included in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). This

bill has passed both the House and Senate and is before a House-Senate Conference Committee.

The Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining safe navigation in over 170 ports throughout New England, including many in coastal communities throughout the Tenth Congressional District. In recent years, dredging funds have been diverted to Iraq, while added restrictions on "reprogramming" have made it difficult for the Army Corps to undertake routine dredging projects throughout the region. Delahunt has led efforts in the House to reverse these policies and restore funds for coastal navigation improvements.

NAVIGATION AID APPROVED FOR NANTUCKET SOUND

Also included in the Commerce Department appropriations bill is \$250,000 for a new weather buoy for Nantucket Sound.

The Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority, fishermen and local mariners have long sought a weather buoy in the middle of Nantucket Sound to improve navigation during inclement weather. This measure will soon go before the full House for approval.