



September 27, 2011
Philadelphia Inquirer Editorial Board

Subject: Letter to the Editor

The Philadelphia Inquirer printed multiple articles recently about the Delaware Deepening without once exploring critical facts that document its fundamental failings; so I write this letter in an effort to balance the conversation a bit. Fifty to 80% of the benefits attributed to the deepening (depending upon which report you read) are to give oil companies cost savings and thus bigger profits. Of the six oil refineries to benefit, one has already closed and at least one more is likely to close within the year (according to Inquirer reporting earlier this month). These closings further undermine the false claims of justification for federal dollars – why was this not mentioned in the Inquirer’s articles about the closings? Further, the deepening will not increase goods or ships to the region – the Army Corps is clear on that point when they say **“the mix and volume of cargoes coming to the benefiting terminals will be the same for either the current 40 foot or proposed 45 foot channel depths.... There is no induced tonnage as a result of the Deepening Project”** So claims by Governor Corbett and the PRPA for new container traffic are more about politics than reality. And the harms to the environment and river jobs are increasing according to experts. The most recent revelation is the damage the deepening project will do to the region’s horseshoe crab populations, a species already in steep decline – the project will inhibit their ability to reproduce by damaging their spawning success. By doing irreparable harm to horseshoe crab spawning this project affects all of us -- the biomedical industry relies upon horseshoe crabs to ensure the vaccines and medical devices we rely on don’t expose us to deadly contamination. Also recently proven is that deepening spoils do in fact contaminate the River – a river people rely upon for drinking, swimming, boating, and the fish they eat. And if you enjoy oysters, blue crab, fishing or birding on the Delaware Bay this project harms you because it puts all of these species on the line. And of course, we must all remember, it was the Government Accountability Office who has three times questioned the economic validity of the project and highlighted its economic failings, and that is why the congress has wisely not invested in it. Whether you care about the deficit, jobs, or the environment, this project is a boondoggle.

Respectfully,
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