



# DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Chris Christie, Governor  
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor  
Bob Martin, Commissioner



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**DEP PREPARING PLANS TO DREDGE BOAT CHANNEL FOR LITTLE EGG INLET**  
*PROJECT WILL ADDRESS SERIOUS SHOALING THAT JEOPARDIZES SAFE BOATING*

**(17/P15) TRENTON** – The Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Coastal Engineering is expediting a project that will clear dangerous shoals from Little Egg Inlet, a major thoroughfare for boat traffic between southern Long Beach Island and Brigantine to the south. The sand will be used to replenish beaches on portions of southern Long Beach Island lost to storms over the past several months.

At the direction of Commissioner Bob Martin, the Division of Coastal Engineering is developing permit applications, design plans and contract specifications with the expectation of going out to bid for the multimillion-dollar project next month.

The U.S. Coast Guard this week pulled buoys marking the channel due to concerns that buildup of sand in the channel has gotten too severe for safe passage of boats. The Coast Guard warned boaters that if they use the inlet they would be doing so at their own risk.

“This situation has become critical so we are moving forward, using state money, to dredge the channel and make it safe again for everyone who needs this vital access for fishing and recreation,” Commissioner Martin said. “We need to take action to get this channel dredged for the safety and enjoyment of the public this summer season.”

One of the widest ocean inlets in New Jersey, Little Egg Harbor Inlet is extremely dynamic, with shoals constantly shifting with the seasons. A federally marked waterway, the inlet has never been dredged. Instead, the Coast Guard every year would use buoys to mark the deepest and safest natural route through the inlet, which provides connections to the Little Egg Harbor portion of Barnegat Bay, Great Bay and the vital Intracoastal Waterway.

The project that the Division of Coastal of Engineering is designing will focus on shoaling of sand that has taken place on the ocean side of the inlet. The Coast Guard-marked channel in this area has at times extended as far as a mile into the ocean.

An estimated 1million to 1.5 million cubic yards of sand will be dredged to create a channel that is 25 feet below mean sea level. In many places, the channel had become less than six feet below

mean sea level, making navigation very difficult, especially when factoring in the rolling of waves in the ocean.

The project, which will require U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits, will be designed to have negligible to no impact on the nearby Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge or migrations of fish. The sand will be used on beaches on southern Long Beach Island that sustained erosion as the result of storms since the completion last year of a major beach fill and dune project.

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