



Resolution R-25-101

Introduced By: Town Council

Date: December 18, 2025

Resolution R-25-101 Requesting Further Review and Consideration of the Wilmington Harbor 403 Project

WHEREAS, the Town of Leland is located in the lower Cape Fear River basin in southeastern North Carolina with multiple tributaries of the River meandering through its community, as well as sensitive estuarine watersheds that supports diverse wildlife and interconnected natural systems; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Wilmington Harbor 403 Project would involve extensive modifications to the federal navigation channel, including deepening or widening, which may influence hydrodynamic conditions, sediment movement, and shoreline stability within the Lower Cape Fear River region; and

WHEREAS, such changes may present potential risks to superficial and deep aquifers used for potable water sources and further increase salt intrusion into the groundwater and marshes adjacent to the River, while migrating the subsequent plume of brackish water further upstream into the River tributaries that will potentially harm plant and animal ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, such changes may present potential risks of disturbing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) layers and coal ash sediments, along with other contaminants or toxic substances, that have been released into the River and deposited in the riverbed, adding to the distribution of, and the human interaction with, these substances that pose potential health risks; and

WHEREAS, such changes may present potential risks to sensitive shorelines, marsh platforms, and riverfront areas, including increased erosion or subsidence in areas within and adjacent to coastal and river-based communities, potentially affecting natural buffers that help protect residences, public spaces, cultural resources, and community infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, federal navigation projects that may pose environmental risks are most effective when accompanied by thoughtful mitigation, long-term monitoring, and adaptive management measures that are proportionate to the scale of the project and the sensitivity of affected ecosystems and communities; and

WHEREAS, the natural environment surrounding the Town of Leland is central to the community's values and identity, contributing to residents' quality of life, recreational opportunities, cultural heritage, and long-standing commitment to conservation and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the health of the surrounding coastal and riverine environment supports tourism, recreation, regional economic activity, and property values that contribute to Leland's overall economic resilience; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Harbor 403 Project will allow larger cargo vessels to navigate the twenty-six mile journey in and out of the Cape Fear River and therefore theoretically increase ship traffic to the North Carolina State Ports – Wilmington facility as a new category of vessels will be introduced into the economic viability analysis, in direct conflict with the assumption stated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement produced by the U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers that more cargo will be sent on fewer ships; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington Harbor 403 Project's secondary impacts would potentially include promotion of increased activity at the Ports facility, which in turn will create additional traffic from heavy truck loads on local roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure that will be significantly subsidized by local taxpayers for repair, maintenance, and replacement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Leland respectfully requests that state and federal decision-makers, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Carolina General Assembly, give due and careful consideration by prioritizing the protection of the citizens of the Lower Cape Fear region and the State's coastal and natural resources when determining consistency with the State's Coastal Management Plan and review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Wilmington Harbor 403 Project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be submitted to the North Carolina General Assembly, the North Carolina Congressional Delegation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, the Brunswick County legislative delegation, and other relevant agencies, for their consideration as decisions related to the Wilmington Harbor 403 Project move forward.

Adopted by Town Council on this 18th day of December, 2025.



Brenda Bozeman, Mayor



Sabrena A. Reinhardt, Town Clerk

