



House O.K.'s \$21.7M for Ports

By Mary Carr Mayle, Savannah Morning News 10/05/09

House OKs \$21.7M for ports

Funds designated for harbor deepening construction, maintenance dredging

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Georgia Ports Authority looks to have come out a winner in the U.S. House-passed Energy and Water Appropriations Bill, which designates more than \$21 million for local deepwater ports for fiscal 2010.

Perhaps the most significant of the budgeted items is about \$1.4 million in Savannah Harbor Expansion Project construction funds, an award that

signals congressional support of the harbor deepening, said Steve Green, GPA board chair.

"The approval of \$1.4 million in construction funds is another solid vote of confidence by the Congress in support of Georgia's effort to prepare the Savannah Harbor channel for the new generation of larger ships that represent the future of ocean commerce," Green said.

The funding approval will help move the deepening project forward in several ways, said U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., who serves on the House Appropria-

tions Committee.

"We think having the \$1.4 million in the construction account is significant because that will keep this from being classified as new project once the study phase is completed next year," he said.

"The big deal is the technicality of what is a new start and what is not a new start - this appropriation takes that question off the table so they can move forward," Kingston said.

"We think this is a good endorsement

BY THE NUMBERS

A total of \$21.712 million is included in the joint U.S. Senate and House conference report, recently approved by the House to fund the deepening and maintenance of the Savannah and Brunswick harbors. The funding includes:

- Savannah Harbor expansion (construction) - \$1.429 million
- Savannah Harbor maintenance dredging - \$13.482 million
- Brunswick Harbor maintenance dredging - \$6.8 million

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Source: Georgia Ports Authority

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for the project on behalf of the federal government," Kingston said. "Savannah is growing in size and scope, and this is important, not only to the many jobs the port creates in Georgia and our area, but to the country.

"It's a reflection of the great work of GPA executive director Doug Marchand and his board, and we're happy to play on the team."

U.S. Rep. John Barrow, D-Ga., agreed.

"This is great news for our community," he said. "The port is one of the economic engines that drives our local economy. Building, improving and maintaining this resource is the way to keep our

folks working, and the way to keep our community running. I'm proud to have worked to make sure this area got these funds."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects to complete all studies and deliver a final draft General Reevaluation Report and Environmental Impact Study for public comment by early March 2010.

Marchand called the deepening project "one of the most important and proactive civil works projects in the country, critical to the continued viability of the National Marine Transportation system and freight mobility along the U.S. East Coast."

Marchand, who will step down as GPA executive director at the end of this year, will remain in an advisory position through 2010, primarily to focus on harbor deepening.

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