



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
DIVISION OF WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

89 Kings Highway
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

OFFICE OF THE
DIRECTOR

PHONE: (302) 739-9921
FAX: (302) 739-6724

October 11, 2017

Mr. Eugene N. Langan
Mayor, Town of Fenwick Island
800 Coastal Highway
Fenwick Island, Delaware 19944-4409

Dear Mayor Langan:

Thank you for your letter dated September 15, 2017, to the Honorable John Carney regarding the condition of Little Assawoman Bay. Governor Carney's Office has asked DNREC's Shoreline and Waterway Management Section to respond directly to your concerns about the need for dredging a channel in the bay. In addition, we will provide some additional information on the issues that were discussed during your public workshop held on August 18, 2017, with Mr. Tony Pratt, Program Administrator of our Section, in attendance.

Dredging and establishing a navigation channel in the bay from the south end of the Assawoman Canal at South Bethany to the Route 54 bridge in Fenwick Island (distance of approximately 3.0 miles) is a very challenging endeavor. As such, the best way to approach a project of this size is to follow the process developed five years ago for handling larger-scale dredging work. The process first involves issuing a task order to one of our engineering consulting firms to plan, design and oversee the project from start to finish. A major component of the planning phase will be investigating ways to beneficially re-use the dredged material since there are very few upland disposal options near the bay. The next step is acquiring the necessary federal and state permit approvals to conduct the project. The third step is to contract a dredging company to perform the work. Traditionally the State is responsible for financing the dredging and channel marking work for the main bay channel. Any adjacent community or facility (marina) wishing to dredge an ancillary channel connecting to the main channel is responsible for financing that work.

As discussed during your workshop, funding is the key. During the legislatively convened meetings of the Delaware Waterways Management and Financing Advisory Committee in 2014-15, it was identified there is a \$3-\$5 million annual funding need to reduce our backlog of dredging projects and maintain navigable channels throughout the Inland Bays.

Delaware's good nature depends on you!

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The Committee came up with several recommendations to establish a sustainable and dedicated source of funding for waterway management operations (dredging, channel marking) statewide. One of the recommendations came to fruition through the passage of Senate Bill No. 261 by the 148th General Assembly in July 2016. The Bill increased boat registration fees in the State with the increase going directly into the Waterway Management Fund. It is estimated that approximately \$1.3 million annually will be generated for waterway management through this increase.

Other recommendations made by the Committee are still being pursued, including utilizing DelDOT's Transportation Trust Fund marine fuel tax revenue for our projects and borrowing money from the State's Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund to initiate projects. At the request of the Center for the Inland Bays, Officials from DNREC and DelDOT recently met to discuss the marine fuel tax issue. DelDOT committed to research the issue internally and present their findings to the Department. In addition, we submitted an application to the State's Revolving Loan Fund in August to seek funding for our top priority dredging project in the Inland Bays, Massey's Ditch.

Regarding the prioritization of projects, we are presently working with DNREC's Delaware Coastal Programs section to secure a Coastal Fellowship grant through NOAA. The Fellow will be responsible for the development of a methodology to evaluate and prioritize dredging projects in Delaware's Inland Bays.

During the summer of 2016, our Section's survey crew conducted a bathymetric survey in lower Little Assawoman Bay in the vicinity of Fenwick Island. The survey was conducted to assess the severity of the reported shoaling problem in and around your community. Mr. Pratt and I would be glad to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the results.

Thank you again for your letter. Please contact me at the address or telephone number listed above or via email at charles.williams@state.de.us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Williams, II
Planner IV

cf: Shawn M. Garvin
Robert R. Palmer
Anthony P. Pratt