



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New Orleans District

News Release

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Public invited to comment on deepening Port of Iberia channel

NEW ORLEANS – The public is invited to give comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on issues involving deepening the Port of Iberia channel. Ideas and issues resulting from the public meetings are incorporated into the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the project.

Comments will be heard at the following two meetings:

- December 3, 7 p.m., in the Vermilion Parish Courthouse, 100 North State Street, Abbeville.
- December 10, 7 p.m., in the Iberia Parish Courthouse, 300 Iberia Street, New Iberia.

The scoping meeting will begin with brief descriptions of the EIS process and the Corps' study process, followed by the tentative alternatives and issues. Alternatives to be considered include enlarging the existing access channels including Freshwater Bayou, a section of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), and Commercial Canal.

Current project depths range from 12 feet in Freshwater Bayou and the GIWW to 8 feet in the Commercial Canal. Alternative depths would include 16, 20 and 25 feet. Other alternatives include the use of dredged material from construction and maintenance of the deeper channels to create and restore wetlands in the area.

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Add 1 – Public Meeting, Port of Iberia

Participants are asked to focus on the following two questions:

1. What are the most important issues, resources and impacts that should be considered in the EIS?
2. Are there any other alternatives or modifications to the tentative alternatives that should be considered in the EIS?

Comments will be summarized and mailed to all attendees.

The Corps of Engineers is beginning the environmental analysis to determine impacts resulting from channel deepening. Deepwater oil and gas exploration and development in the Gulf of Mexico has increased because of demand and advancements in deepwater drilling technologies that include larger platforms.

Many of the larger platforms are constructed in foreign countries because there are not enough competitive fabrication yards in the United States with adequate navigation channels. Also, the vessels servicing the platforms require deeper channels. The fabrication industry in the Port of Iberia could capture a significant portion of the offshore fabrication market if they had deeper navigation channels to their facilities.

Address questions about the **environmental impact statement** to Michael Salyer, telephone 504-862-2037 or e-mail michael.r.salyer@mvn02.usace.army.mil.

Below: Map of project channels.

