

## **CESAS Form 19 Support Documentation**

### **Georgia Ports Authority Colonel's Island Terminal – Berth 2 Upgrades Glynn County, Georgia**

The following information is submitted as support documentation in association with the attached application requesting authorization to impact waters of the U.S. pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 pursuant to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Part 12-5-286 (OCGA).

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) is proposing to rehabilitate and upgrade the existing Berth 2 at Colonel's Island Terminal (CIT). The proposed project will allow the berth to be used as a dedicated berth for automotive (Ro-Ro) cargo. Currently, the berth is designed to handle agri-bulk products. The project area is located near the confluence of the South Brunswick River and the Turtle River in southern Glynn County. Landside access to the site is via Joe Frank Harris Drive from U.S. Highway 17, approximately 2.5 miles east of Interstate-95. The center coordinates of the project area are approximately 31.13265° N, 81.53681° W.

#### **2.0 Background**

Over the last decade, Georgia's deepwater ports have grown to be amongst the busiest and largest in the country for a variety of reasons. GPA's commitment to infrastructure improvement, facilities expansion, and customer service have all contributed to this unparalleled growth. Today, Georgia's deepwater ports and inland barge terminals support a dynamic economic engine throughout the entire state of Georgia, and it is vital to the state's economy and the import/export trade of the U.S. that the Georgia ports are maintained and expanded to keep up with increasing demand. The ports support over 439,000 full or part time jobs, contribute \$25 billion in income, and provide \$2.9 billion in state and local taxes.

#### **3.0 Project Need & Purpose**

In Brunswick, the CIT is GPA's base of operations for import and export of automobile cargo. The facility consists of three berths and has a total area of over 1,700 acres. Historically, the terminal has accommodated both Ro-Ro cargo as well as agri-bulk cargo including wheat, soybeans, and other agricultural products at Berth 2. Over the last several years, however, performance and growth in the Ro-Ro sector has outpaced agri-bulk. Generally, this growth is driven by a number of key factors including shifting population centers from the Northeast to the Southeast, above-average population growth in the Southeast, and manufacturers moving their plants here to take advantage of lower labor and land costs, better logistics, lower energy costs, state incentives, and lower taxes. The overall automotive throughput at CIT for all processors has grown at an average growth rate of over 7% per year over the last two decades. Since 1997, the throughput of all autos at the terminal has increased from 136,159 rolling units to over 590,000 units in 2018. To maximize the terminal's potential, the applicant made the decision to replace the existing agri-bulk facility at Berth 2 with additional Ro-Ro cargo storage. Berths 1 and 3 have always been dedicated Ro-Ro berths used exclusively for Ro-Ro cargo. Berth 2 has been a dedicated agri-bulk berth, but was also used for automotive cargo when a bulk ship was not at berth. Now, with the agri-bulk facility gone, improvements are needed at the berth to allow it to better meet the demand for increased usage by Ro-Ro vessels.

#### **4.0 Proposed Activities in Jurisdiction**

All activities proposed for the project are water dependent and necessary to improve the functionality of Berth 2 as a dedicated Ro-Ro berth. The existing structure consists of an approximately 750' x 35' pile-supported berth with four access bridges extending from the upland. On the channelward side are several bump-outs supporting the fenders and mooring hardware. On the upstream and downstream sides are concrete mooring dolphins connected by a pile-supported walkway. The total square footage of the existing Berth 2 structure is approximately 51,500 square feet.

The proposed project will improve the upstream side of the dock, allowing cars the ability to drive onto and off of ships safely. The 164 foot long western access bridge will be widened on the upstream side by 63 feet (10,332 sq. ft.). An additional 44' x 44' open corner of the dock will also be decked to provide safer loading and unloading of wheeled cargo (968 sq. ft.). The project will also provide routine repairs and rehabilitation to the existing Berth 2 dock structure as needed. Damaged piles will be encapsulated by placing a form around the damaged areas and filling the forms with pumped epoxy or grout. Underdeck platform rehabilitation work will include installing forms around damaged portions of existing concrete beams and slabs and filling the forms with pumped concrete. Holes, gaps, and cracks in the existing concrete liner along the bank will also be repaired by placing concrete and/or stone within these compromised areas in order to restore shoreline erosion protection and to protect it from further degradation. Above-deck upgrades, removal, or replacement of bollards, fenders, utilities, handrails, and crane rails will also be completed.

The existing walkway and two mooring dolphins in this location on the inshore and upstream side of the dock will be removed from jurisdiction as part of the project (675 sq. ft.). No channelward extension of the existing structures is proposed, and the structures will extend approximately 164 feet into the waterway where the waterway is approximately 1,000 feet wide (MLW to MLW). The proposed project, with the removal of the existing dolphins/walkway will increase the dock structure from approximately 51,500 square feet to approximately 62,125 square feet – an increase of 10,625 square feet (0.244 acre).

### **5.0 Alternatives Analysis**

Prior to deciding on a final site for the berth improvements, the applicant evaluated several alternatives. Mainly, the alternative to the project included designing the berth to meet the standard Ro-Ro design of the other two berths on-terminal. This includes a 135-foot wide wharf and provides the maximum amount of useable and safe workspace on the dock. This alternative increased the width of the dock by 100 feet to the inside and would deck the area between the west end and central access bridges. The downstream end could remain as-is to minimize impacts. Still, this alternative resulted in a total of 30,840 square feet of additional impact to jurisdiction. However, the applicant carefully evaluated this option and determined that the additional amount of impact was not necessary at this time. The preferred alternative could be utilized and still provide the required facility to safely and efficiently load and unload wheeled cargo.

The only other alternative to the project would be to do nothing. It would still be possible to use the berth for Ro-Ro cargo; however, with the berth being used solely for Ro-Ro cargo, chances of a crash or other auto incident occurring would be much higher. The berth is simply not designed to handle high volumes of cars at a high rate. The improvements are needed to ensure the safety of both the dock workers, cargo handlers, and the cargo and to improve the overall operational functionality and efficiency of the berth.

### **6.0 Avoidance and Minimization:**

In order to minimize the effects of the proposed project, all development activities will be performed using best management practices to further avoid and minimize impacts to upstream and downstream waters. In order to minimize the effects to protected species and habitats, a strict project construction methodology will be implemented for the project. This includes the use of vibratory hammer where feasible to advance the proposed steel H fender piles to minimize noise levels. Use of impact hammer on the proposed 18" concrete piles will include a few low energy taps at the start of each pile driving to disperse nearby aquatic species so they are not harmed by noise levels. A cushion block will also be used on top of the piles to further reduce noise levels. All work will be performed from upland or waterborne barge as much as possible. It is anticipated that these measures will minimize the effect of the project to not only avoided waters, but also to protected species and habitats.

### **7.0 Threatened and Endangered Species**

The property was assessed for the potential occurrence of threatened and endangered species and habitats suitable to sustain these listed species for Glynn County, Georgia. The habitats found on site consist of open water and developed upland. The aquatic habitat could support the shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon, west Indian manatee, and sea turtles during certain times of the year. Additionally, foraging habitat may be present for wood stork. As mentioned above, low energy taps and a cushion block will be used for the concrete pile driving. The concrete piles will be 18," and it is widely accepted that driving

piles under 20" produces much lower noise propagation into the waterway. Vibratory hammer installation, which is known to produce non-harmful noise levels, will be used for the fender piles to the greatest extent practicable. The applicant will follow USACE's Standard Manatee Conditions during construction, so the project should have no adverse effect on manatees. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that the proposed project would affect wood storks through the impact of foraging habitat, and no wading bird rookeries are located in close proximity to the project. The lighting of the berth will follow the standards outlined in the existing Colonel's Island Terminal Light Management Plan and will not add any additional direct or indirect light impacts which may affect nesting sea turtles on the barrier islands. Based on all of these avoidance and minimization measures, it was determined that the proposed project would have no adverse effect on any listed species.

### **8.0 Essential Fish Habitat**

The proposed waterside activities are located within coastal waters identified as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The majority of the proposed activities will occur over deep open water. No dredging, fill, or loss of aquatic habitat will occur, and the decking over the intertidal zone will occur primarily over concrete-lined bank. It was therefore determined that the proposed project would not adversely affect EFH.

### **9.0 Impaired Waters**

The Turtle River system at the project site is listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waters (in 2012) as not supporting the use of aquatic life harvesting, PCB's, and other causes. The project will result in a minimal amount of pile-supported decking, and no dredging or other activities which may affect water quality will occur.

### **10.0 Upland Component:**

The upland component associated with the project is the approximately 63' wide access approach to the new upstream wharf extension. It will tie in to the existing pavement on the upland side which is currently being used for landside cargo transport. Construction activities within the upland component include minimal site grading and paving to tie into the terminal's existing road system. The development activities within the upland component buffer (+/-3,150 sq. ft.) are not expected to have an adverse effect on the marshlands component. The existing bank is already lined with a concrete liner to stabilize the slopes. Just upstream of the proposed decking, the bank is properly stabilized with rip-rap. Stormwater received on the proposed structure will be treated in conformance with the existing dock facility. A new closure wall will be used to retain soil material under the road, and it will tie in to the existing closure wall downstream of the access bridge. Stormwater will be naturally treated by the adjacent pervious areas to the greatest extent practicable. No ditches, swales, pipes, or flumes are proposed, and there will be no new point source discharge of stormwater from the upland component directly into the marshlands component. During construction, proper BMP's such as silt fencing, grassed slopes, etc. will be utilized to prevent erosion and sedimentation. The proposed construction activities within the upland component of the project will not require a state waters buffer variance.

### **11.0 Supplemental Information**

This additional information is provided for compliance with Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 information requirements:

#### **OCGA 12-5-286. Permits to fill, drain, etc., marshlands.**

*(b) Each application for such permit shall be, properly executed, filed with the department on forms as prescribed by the department, and shall include:*

*(1) The name and address of the applicant-*

Georgia Ports Authority  
Attn: Mr. Chris Novack, P.E.  
P.O. Box 2406  
Savannah, Georgia 31402

**(2) A plan or drawing showing the applicant's proposal and the manner or method by which such proposal shall be accomplished. Such plan shall identify the coastal marshlands affected-**

See attached drawings from AECOM.

**(3) A plat of the area in which the proposed work will take place-**

A plat is referenced in the deed to the property as being recorded in Plat Book 2, Page 84 in the office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Glynn County, but the applicant did not have a copy available. The attached permit exhibits depict the area in which the proposed work will take place.

**(4) A copy of the deed or other instrument under which the applicant claims title to the property or, if the applicant is not the owner, then a copy of the deed or other instrument under which the owner claims title together with written permission from the owner to carry out the project on his land. In lieu of a deed or other instrument referred to in this paragraph, the committee may accept some other reasonable evidence of ownership of the property in question or other lawful authority to make use of the property; The committee will not adjudicate title disputes concerning the property which is the subject of the application; provided, however, the committee may decline to process an application when submitted documents show conflicting deeds-**

Attached is the general warranty deed to the property. The deed was recorded in Deed Book 10X, Page 166 of the office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Glynn County.

**(5) A list of all adjoining landowners together with such owners' addresses, provided that if the names or addresses of adjoining landowners cannot be determined, the applicant shall file in lieu thereof a sworn affidavit that a diligent search, including, without limitation, a search of the records of the county tax assessor's office, has been made but that the applicant was not able to ascertain the names or addresses, as the case may be, of adjoining landowners-**

State of Georgia  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.  
SE 1454E  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Adolfo Correia  
P.O. Box 2154  
Brunswick, GA 31521

**(6) A letter from the local governing authority of the political subdivision in which the property is located, stating that the applicant's proposal does not violate any zoning law;**

The GPA was created in 1945 by an Act of the General Assembly and is codified in O.C.G.A. 52-2-1 through 52-2-39. As an instrumentality of the State of Georgia, the GPA is not bound by county ordinances, including zoning ordinances of Glynn County. As stated in O.C.G.A. § 1-3-8; 1958-59 Op. Att'y Gen. p. 5., even a general power granted to a county does not apply to the state or its instrumentalities in the absence of express language in the grant. Instead, the GPA is responsible for making all necessary rules and regulations for its own government as stated in O.C.G.A. 52-2-7. The local zoning issue was specifically addressed in a 1985 Opinion from the Georgia Attorney General, being No. U84-11, where the Attorney General stated that real estate of the GPA is not subject to local zoning ordinances of Glynn County.

The proposed dock upgrades conform to the existing land use at the terminal, but as illustrated by state law and the official Opinion from the Georgia Attorney General, no letter from the Glynn County Zoning & Planning Division is required.

**(7) A non-refundable application fee to be set by the board in an amount necessary to defray the administrative cost of issuing such permit. Renewal fees shall be equal to application fees, which shall not exceed \$1,000.00 for any one proposal and shall be paid to the department.**

The applicant will provide the appropriate application fee once the amount is set/requested by CRD.

**(8) A description from the applicant of alternative sites and why they are not feasible and a discussion of why the permit should be granted-**

See above project description

**(9) A statement from the applicant that he has made inquiry to the appropriate authorities that the proposed project is not over a landfill or hazardous waste site and that the site is otherwise suitable for the proposed project-**

A review of the Hazardous Site Index for Glynn County, Georgia indicates that the subject property does not contain hazardous waste sites or landfills.

**(10) A copy of the water quality certification issued by the department if required for the proposed project-**

The project will be authorized by a Letter of Permission from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Because the project does not require a Section 404 action, no 401 Water Quality Certification will be required.

**(11) Certification by the applicant of adherence to soil and erosion control responsibilities if required for the proposed project-**

The project will conform to all state-mandated land disturbing and stormwater management requirements.

**(12) Such additional information as is required by the committee to properly evaluate the application.**

The GPA was created in 1945 to implement a constitutional mandate to construct and maintain state docks (See Ga. Const. 1945, Art. VII, Sec. II, Para. I(6); Ga. Const. 1983, Art. VII, Sec. III, Para. I(a)). The GPA performs "an essential governmental function" for public purposes for the "benefit of the people of this state" (O.C.G.A. § 52-2-37). With that in mind, this application has been prepared with consideration for the interests of the general public of the State of Georgia as defined in O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(g). The project is clearly in the public's best interest as it will promote the growth and continuance of Georgia's deepwater ports which is a significant economic engine in the state all while minimizing environmental effects to the greatest extent practicable. The project will result in increased jobs, tax revenue, and income for residents of the state.

**OCGA 12-5-286. Permits to fill, drain, etc., marshlands.**

**(g) In passing upon the application for permit, the committee shall consider the public interest, which, for purposes of this part, shall be deemed to be the following considerations:**

**(1) Whether or not unreasonably harmful obstruction to or alteration of the natural flow of navigational water within the affected area will arise as a result of the proposal-**

The proposed project will not alter natural flow of navigable waters nor will it obstruct public navigation. The proposed structures will extend no further into the waterway than the existing dock. The project will simply extend the access bridge upstream by 63 feet. The structures will extend no more than 164 feet into the waterway where the waterway is over 1,000 feet wide (MLW to MLW).

**(2) *Whether or not unreasonably harmful or increased erosion, shoaling of channels, or stagnant areas of water will be created-***

The proposed project will not increase erosion, shoaling of channels, or create stagnant areas of water. It will simply extend the dock upstream by 63 feet and provide structural repairs to the existing facility.

**(3) *Whether or not the granting of a permit and the completion of the applicant's proposal will unreasonably interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, clams, or other marine life, or wildlife, or other resources, including but not limited to water and oxygen supply-***

The proposed project will not interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, clams, or other marine life, or wildlife, or other resources, nor affect water and oxygen supply.

October 18, 2019

Mr. Paul Tobler  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Coastal Resources Division  
One Conservation Way, Suite 300  
Brunswick, Georgia 31520-8687

**Subject: Response to RAI  
Colonel's Island Terminal Berth 2 Upgrades  
Glynn County, Georgia**

Dear Mr. Tobler:

We are in receipt of your letter requesting additional information for the Colonel's Island Terminal – Berth 2 Upgrades Project. On behalf of Georgia Ports Authority (applicant), Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc. (SECI) is pleased to submit the below additional information in response to your letter. The comments are included in italic below followed by our response:

Item 1:

*Please provide \$100.00 application fee.*

Response:

A check in the amount of \$100.00 has been mailed to DNR along with \$6.00 to reimburse Mr. Kevin Brady for pulling the property plat at the courthouse.

Item 2:

- a) How much additional material will be added to the existing concrete liner? What is the existing square footage within jurisdiction?*
- b) How will the underdeck maintenance be accomplished*
- c) Section 6.0 states all work will be done from the upland or a barge as much as possible. Please clarify if other construction methods will be used*

Response:

The existing concrete fabriform liner spans the entire shoreline landward of the existing wharf. It totals approximately 37,200 square feet (0.854 ac.) within jurisdiction. The project will repair the liner as needed throughout a variety of places. In some places the liner is separated. In others, there are holes and cracks. It is difficult to provide an exact square footage, but based on the best available data, we estimate the fabriform repairs will not exceed 4,050 square feet (0.093 ac.). It should be noted that all repairs are to the existing liner and will not impact any additional area of jurisdiction.

Underdeck maintenance will be accomplished using work float stages to remove damaged concrete, to prep existing surfaces, and to install formwork. Concrete repair product will be pumped into the forms and onto damaged surfaces to preserve against further deterioration and to strengthen.

Section 6.0 should have been worded to say "All work will be performed from upland or the existing dock as much as possible or by waterborne barge/boat." No other construction methods are proposed.



Item 3:

*Is the CMPA Jurisdiction line shown on the drawings the MHW line? A site visit will be needed in order to verify as well as signed, stamped, and dated drawings.*

Response:

The CMPA line on the drawing is the ordinary high water mark delineated by us in the field as indicated by water staining and/or wrack on the concrete liner (there is no vegetation). The line has been delineated and marked with survey paint. Please contact us to set up a site visit at your earliest convenience. Attached are signed and stamped permit drawings.

Item 4:

*Please provide a property boundary plat.*

Response:

Mr. Brady pulled the plat at the courthouse, and it is our understanding from his 10/8/19 email that everything has been satisfied regarding real property ownership. Attached is a \$6.00 check for reimbursement.

Item 5:

*Please provide the following measurements:*

- a) Approximate square footage in jurisdiction of: 4 existing access bridges, existing bumpouts and fenders, and existing dolphins and walkway*
- b) Total width of the proposed access bridge*
- c) Square footage of the proposed pile supported fender system*

Response:

The existing structure consists of an approximately 750' x 35' (26,250 sf) pile-supported berth with four access bridges extending from the upland. From west to east, the bridges are approximately 32' x 92' (2,944 sf), 20' x 115' with flared ends (3,540 sf), 120' x 119' (14,280 sf), and 20 x 134 (2,680 sf). On the channelward side of the dock are five half-octagon 9' x 30' bump-outs (breasting dolphins) supporting the fenders and mooring hardware (1,180 sf total). On the upstream corner of the dock is a walkway with a single octagonal mooring dolphin totaling approximately 626 sf. The total square footage of the existing Berth 2 structure is approximately 51,500 square feet. Other structures not included in this square footage are existing mooring dolphins and walkways connecting Berth 2 with the upstream and downstream docks and the cone fenders on the breasting dolphins which total approximately 260 sf.

The existing 32' wide westernmost access bridge will be widened by 63' to bring the total width to 95'. This width is needed for safely loading and offloading cars, trucks, and heavy machinery while still allowing adequate room for safety equipment and other access during loading/unloading operations. The proposed fender system on the channelward side of the dock will consist of pile supported ME leg fenders with UHMW-PE facing totaling approximately 555 square feet.

Item 6:

*Please define the upland component of the project on the site plan:*

Response:

The upland component is the approximately 63' wide access approach to the new upstream wharf extension totaling approximately 1,944 sf. It is indicated on the attached drawing as the lightly shaded area landward of the wharf extension. The remainder of the marshlands buffer consists of existing paved and developed upland area. The new approach will tie in to the existing pavement on the upland side which is currently being used for landside cargo transport. Construction activities within the upland component include site grading, filling, and paving to tie into the terminal's existing road system. These activities are necessary for access and not



expected to have an adverse effect on the marshlands component. The existing bank is already lined with a concrete liner to stabilize the slopes. Just upstream of the proposed decking, the bank is properly stabilized with rip-rap. Stormwater received on the proposed structure will be treated in conformance with the existing dock facility. A new closure wall will be used to retain soil material under the road, and it will tie in to the existing closure wall downstream of the access bridge. Stormwater will be naturally treated by the adjacent pervious areas to the greatest extent practicable. No ditches, swales, pipes, or flumes are proposed, and there will be no new point source discharge of stormwater from the upland component directly into the marshlands component. During construction, proper BMP's such as silt fencing, grassed slopes, etc. will be utilized to prevent erosion and sedimentation. The proposed construction activities within the upland component of the project will not require a state waters buffer variance.

Item 7:

*Provide a copy of the water quality certification issued by the Department, if required for the proposed project.*

Response:

The Corps of Engineers is processing the action as a Letter of Permission and has already completed their interagency coordination process. No comments were received. Because there is no 404 action, a 401 Water Quality Certification will not be required for this project.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this response letter, and request that the project be placed on public notice at your earliest opportunity. Following your review of this information, please contact us at (912) 232-0451 should you wish to schedule a site visit or have any questions.

Sincerely,



Brandon W. Wall  
Project Biologist  
Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Jim Girourad – AECOM