

JACKSONVILLE HARBOR DEEPENING PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING

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PLACE: JAXPORT Cruise Terminal
9810 August Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32226

REPORTED BY: Amanda Robinson, RPR,
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. ELLISON: Good evening, everyone.
3 We're going to go ahead and get started. My
4 name is Amanda Ellison. I'm with the Army
5 Corps of Engineers. I would like to thank
6 each of you for coming out this evening as
7 we're here to present to you information
8 about the tentatively-selected plan for the
9 Jacksonville Harbor Deepening Study.

10 Before we get started with our
11 presentation, I would like to introduce a
12 few people to you. We have with us tonight
13 Florida House of Representatives Mr. Lake
14 Ray, thank you.

15 Representing Senator Marco Rubio's
16 office, we have Ashley Cook.

17 And representing Congressman Crenshaw's
18 office, we have Jackie Smith with us, thank
19 you.

20 At this time I would like to introduce
21 our Commander for the Jacksonville District
22 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Colonel Allen
23 Dodd.

24 COLONEL DODD: Good evening, everyone.
25 Are we on now? Okay. Good evening,

1 everyone. I'm going to read through some
2 comments here because there are a couple key
3 points that I want to hit as we get ready to
4 go into the briefing.

5 But as was just mentioned, my name is
6 Colonel Allen Dodd. I'm the Commander of
7 the Jacksonville District part of the U.S.
8 Army Corps of Engineers. And we're here to
9 talk tonight about this deepening project.

10 As you know, this is a tremendous
11 milestone for us in this project. We just
12 selected the draft tentatively-selected plan
13 and we released it for public comment. It
14 is very important for everybody here, as
15 we're talking about this, that we hear from
16 you. It's your opportunity to give us
17 feedback as to what we have completed so far
18 and let us know what your concerns and
19 issues are, because it's all about producing
20 the best possible project as we're moving
21 forward.

22 The people from the Jacksonville
23 District and the Port, we're here to answer
24 your questions and to get comments from you.
25 And we look forward to hearing about your

1 interests, your concerns and your feedback.

2 In 2012 President Obama announced the
3 "We Can't Wait" initiative, which announced
4 seven nationally important ports to help
5 expedite and modernize transportation
6 shipping for our nation. And two of those
7 major ports are here in Florida: The Port
8 here in Jacksonville and the Port in Miami.

9 For the Port in Jacksonville, the "We
10 Can't Wait" initiative included completing
11 the feasibility study by April of 2014. And
12 as many of you know, that was extremely
13 expedited from the original timeline for
14 this report.

15 Here we are at the release of the
16 tentatively-selected plan, the draft report,
17 and this team has worked extremely hard to
18 keep us on track and to produce this report
19 on time and to get it to you so that you can
20 see what the plan is and understand all the
21 work that has been done so far in order to
22 look at whether we should deepen the Port
23 and how deep, what we should be doing.

24 It's very important to note, though,
25 that this is not the end of the study. This

1 is just one step in it. And we still have a
2 lot of work to do. And that's where you are
3 so important to this process. We really do
4 encourage you to continue to be involved and
5 give us feedback on the report so that we
6 can make it a better product.

7 I would ask you to either submit your
8 comments in writing to us, to give us
9 comments in this meeting itself or just to
10 participate in other conference calls and
11 other events that we'll be having over the
12 next few months as we're moving forward.
13 Every comment does matter and it will be
14 addressed as we move through the process.

15 Tonight we're going to be addressing
16 some specific concerns that we know that
17 some of you have dealing with bank erosion,
18 salinity impacts and the tributaries, just
19 to name a few.

20 After the presentation we'll have team
21 members who are going to be available to
22 talk with you individually and help to
23 answer any other questions that you may have
24 that may not be addressed in the meeting.

25 We also have comment cards that are

1 here. And we would encourage you to provide
2 us written comments so that we can also
3 include it as part of the overall study that
4 we're doing and to enable us to answer those
5 as we go through and finalize the report.

6 We have a court reporter here. And she
7 will be recording everything that is said
8 throughout the meeting so that it becomes
9 part of the official record of what we are
10 accomplishing tonight.

11 This is an extremely important project
12 not only to Jacksonville but to Florida, to
13 the nation. That is why it's one of the
14 President's priority projects and why we
15 have put so much effort into this over the
16 past year. And we really do look forward to
17 continuing to work with the community, with
18 the city of Jacksonville and the state as we
19 finalize the report and are able to move
20 forward.

21 So I would like to thank everybody for
22 being here. I would like to thank the team
23 for all the work they've done to this point.

24 At this time what I would like to do is
25 turn it over to Mr. Chris Kauffmann who is a

1 chief operating officer for JAXPORT. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. KAUFFMANN: Well, good evening. I'm
4 Chris Kauffmann, the Chief Operating Officer
5 of the Port. And I think I met many of you
6 here before at these meetings. I want to
7 tell you it's great to have you here. This
8 project Colonel Dodd just referred to is a
9 community project. This is all of us. This
10 is not just the great Corps team we have
11 here in Jacksonville or the Port Authority
12 as the local sponsor. It's everyone in here
13 has a part in this, and we want you to
14 appreciate that.

15 We've got representatives from the
16 community concerned about environmental
17 issues. We have people in here from the
18 shipping lines that service here in
19 Jacksonville.

20 And we're all in this together. This is
21 one team, one fight, and we want to be able
22 to satisfy all the issues. And that's why
23 this is so important, and we're glad you're
24 here.

25 I'm going to take now the opportunity to

1 introduce Jason, who is the project manager
2 for this project going to 47 feet. And he's
3 going to carry on and run the meeting.

4 But please, if you've got questions,
5 raise them. Either raise them here, as was
6 mentioned, or put them in writing. They
7 will all be addressed. And we want to make
8 sure that this is a complete project taking
9 everybody's considerations as we move
10 forward. Thank you very much.

11 Jason.

12 MR. HARRAH: Okay. Good evening,
13 everyone. Glad to see everyone come out.
14 It shows that everyone has a vested interest
15 in this project. We're going to go through
16 some slides tonight. We're going to talk
17 generally about the project overview.

18 In the past I've heard questions and
19 comments from folks that typically we just
20 do the typical same old slides, we show the
21 schedule, we show the budgets for the
22 project, but we're really not addressing or
23 understanding any of the community's
24 concerns. So we picked 10 issues that
25 you'll see in a few minutes, we'll talk

1 about those, what we think the comments are.
2 You're going to hear a little bit about
3 that, as well. We want to make sure that we
4 took the chance in this meeting to address
5 some of those concerns, the more vocal, the
6 more repetitive ones we've heard from the
7 community.

8 Here is our agenda: First, I want to
9 start out with team member introductions.
10 We're going to talk a little about the
11 project history, some of the study goals,
12 study area, the tentatively-selected plan
13 overview. As most folks know, the Corps'
14 plan was 45 feet. The locally-preferred
15 plan, which was approved by Ms. Darcy's
16 office for the report, is 47 feet.

17 We'll talk about the schedule. Some
18 folks have made reference to the President
19 of the United States and "We Can't Wait"
20 initiative. We're going to show you what
21 some of those actual dates are so folks are
22 aware of the dates we are working towards as
23 a team.

24 We will talk about, as I mentioned, the
25 discussion of the issues and concerns we've

1 heard a lot about. And lastly, we'll have a
2 comment-question period. And then we'll
3 have an extended poster session so folks can
4 get up and ask more questions of the team
5 members.

6 So first, team member introductions:
7 Samantha Borer. Samantha, please stand up.
8 She's the planning technical lead for the
9 project. She takes all the components from
10 the various members and puts them in the
11 report, makes everything come out.

12 Steve Bratos. Steve, he's the
13 engineering modeling lead for the project.
14 He works directly with Taylor Engineering to
15 make some of these models for salinity,
16 et cetera, to do the quality assurance
17 reviews, models and stuff like that.

18 Mr. Donaldson. Matt Donaldson, is an
19 attorney for the Jacksonville District
20 helping out with some of the legal issues
21 for the project.

22 Paul Stodola. As many folks probably
23 heard, Paul is the one receiving all the
24 comments and questions that come in from the
25 report. He's our environmental lead for the

1 project.

2 Steve Conger. Steve is the engineering
3 technical lead for the project. He looks at
4 all the dredging quantities, the blasting, a
5 lot of those aspects people are interested
6 in, as well. And Steve and his team do a
7 great job with that.

8 Amanda Ellison. Amanda, stand up.
9 Amanda is the corporate communications team
10 member for the project. She gets everything
11 ready, makes the nice magazines that you
12 guys picked up earlier. So she's a vital
13 member for the team.

14 And everyone has meet Colonel Dodd, as
15 well.

16 We also have members here from the
17 United States Geological Survey. We have
18 team members from Taylor Engineering here.

19 And Mike Hollingsworth, I forgot Mike.
20 Mike is the water quality permit guy for the
21 project. Mike will be going out for water
22 quality permit sometime when we get near the
23 plans and specs phase for the project.

24 Lastly, hiding in the back, Idris Dobbs.
25 Idris, wave your hand. He's the senior

1 economist for the project. He will be here
2 to answer any questions you have on
3 benefits, benefit-to-cost ratios, et cetera
4 for the project.

5 Deepening history. The deepening of the
6 Jacksonville Harbor goes back several years.
7 In 1880 we actually started deepening to
8 12.5 feet; 1896 we took it to 18 feet; 1910
9 to 30 feet; 1978 to 38 feet; 2003 we saw 40
10 feet from River Mile 0 -- I thought my laser
11 was working, it's not working -- from River
12 Mile 0 all the way to River Mile 14.7; and
13 then in 2010 we deepened from 14.7 all the
14 way to River Mile 20 down near Talleyrand;
15 2013, fast forward, here we are with the
16 tentatively-selected plan to deepen River
17 Mile 0 to 13 to 47 feet.

18 Now, keep in mind one key aspect here,
19 in the Mayport area here, from River Mile 0
20 to approximately right here, we're already
21 at 50 feet. So we already have some of the
22 deepening completed as part of the Navy
23 project.

24 So what's the purpose of this study?
25 What are we trying to get out of this? What

1 are we gaining?

2 We want to reduce navigation
3 transportation costs. We want to reduce
4 navigation constraints, one-way traffic in
5 the channel. We want to accommodate larger
6 vessels. Everyone knows the Panama Canal is
7 expanding. Larger vessels will be used to
8 meet the demands of the population of
9 America and other countries. As they
10 continue to grow, so does the need for
11 additional cargo, commodities and goods.

12 We want to develop a recommended plan
13 that builds a sustainable future for the
14 nation and is environmentally acceptable. I
15 can't stress that enough. We want to do a
16 project that provides economic benefits to
17 the city and Northeast Florida but does it
18 in an environmentally conscious way.

19 The study area, as I mentioned a minute
20 ago, originally -- the project is broken
21 down in three segments, okay. Originally we
22 were studying from River Mile 0 to River
23 Mile 14. Segment 2 goes from River Mile 14
24 down to Talleyrand, River Mile 20. And
25 Segment 3 is the West Blount Island

1 Channel -- (inaudible) -- and that was
2 eliminated.

3 So we got to working with the sponsor.
4 And we were determining where the best
5 benefits would come out versus the dredging
6 cost. We want to make sure we minimize
7 impacts and get the best economic benefit.
8 So again, we reduced, we took out the West
9 Blount Island Channel from the study. We
10 took out River Mile 20 all the way to 14.
11 And then we went a step further, we took it
12 from 14 all the way to River Mile 13, which
13 is pretty much where we're at here tonight.

14 So that gave us -- that was a two-fold
15 advantage: One, it reduced the cost of the
16 project; two, it allowed us to maximize our
17 benefits. Some of these areas have
18 benefits, but the maximum benefits are from
19 13 to 0. And lastly, it helped us minimize
20 any environmental impacts that we may see
21 for the project, okay.

22 So what depth are we? What's it going
23 to cost? What's the benefits? That's a
24 question a lot of folks have.

25 The estimated project cost right now is

1 \$733 million for 47 feet. This includes
2 \$80 million for mitigation and monitoring.
3 The federal share of that is \$350 million.
4 The nonfederal share for Jacksonville Port
5 Authority is \$383 million.

6 And some folks may have questions of
7 what is the difference there. The Port has
8 costs for their own infrastructure they have
9 to pick up. And the Port also picks up 100
10 percent of the cost to go from 45 feet to 47
11 feet because that's their locally-preferred
12 plan. The benefit-to-cost ratio for the
13 project is 1.40.

14 Right now we're throwing out an
15 estimated construction duration of four to
16 six years. Well, that's a pretty big gap,
17 that's a two-year gap. Why is that? The
18 reason is several different companies have
19 several different types of equipment. Some
20 companies may use certain equipment that can
21 do it in four years, other companies may bid
22 the project at a lower price and it takes
23 six years. So right now our estimate is
24 four to six years for construction.

25 The construction start is dependent upon

1 authorization or appropriation. It takes
2 two to tango. You have to have the
3 authorization for the project and
4 appropriations. You have to have the
5 authorization and the money, okay.

6 Our job for the Corps of Engineers is to
7 complete the report, have that report signed
8 off by the chief of engineers, forward it to
9 Congress and then from there they make the
10 authorization and the appropriations.

11 We're expecting about 18 million cubic
12 yards of material to be removed from the
13 channel from 0 to 13. And all the dredge
14 material right now will be disposed of in an
15 ocean disposal site. The
16 tentatively-selected plan of 47 feet, again,
17 goes from River Mile 0 to 13.

18 There is my laser. It's not showing up
19 on the screen.

20 We have a few widening areas that will
21 occur in here to allow two-way traffic. We
22 have turning basins at Blount Island that
23 will be constructed and a turning basin at
24 Brills Cut. And what we do to develop these
25 turning basins, we do ship simulation to --

1 we work with the harbor pilots to determine
2 what kind of turning basins are needed to
3 allow these vessels to turn around and
4 maneuver. We don't want to have any
5 congestion in the channel. So the
6 simulation report is produced for widening
7 areas and the turning basins for the
8 project.

9 So what's our timeline? October 2011
10 President Obama came out with the "We Can't
11 Wait" initiative. And essentially, the date
12 that was key on was the chief of engineer's
13 report being completed in April of 2014.

14 So let's back up. The public review
15 period ends July 31st, okay. We had several
16 requests for extension. That extension was
17 granted. It was another 16 days. So that
18 takes us to July 31st for the public to
19 provide comments to Mr. Stodola.

20 Once we get all these comments -- this
21 isn't the only review we have going on, we
22 have reviews in our division office in
23 Atlanta, headquarters, we have an
24 independent external peer review, which is a
25 group nonaffiliated with the Corps, of

1 engineers, economists, environmentalists
2 that look over everything we've done and
3 provide comments and questions for us to
4 address in the report. So we're going to
5 take all those comments, all those
6 corrections and we're going to complete a
7 final report in September of 2013.

8 In April of 2014, there are several
9 reviews that happen through there, there is
10 a civil works review board, several
11 different things that happen. The key date,
12 April 30th, 2014, we will have a chief of
13 engineers report. From there the report
14 goes to Congress for authorization.
15 Usually, that's a three to four to
16 five-month process to get through the loops,
17 get through the committees and get to
18 Congress. So that will be in September
19 2014.

20 And then from there, construction
21 starts. That's pretty much out of our
22 hands. That's up to Congress to determine
23 when that project gets authorized.
24 Typically, those happen in water resource
25 development acts. There is a lot of news on

1 that right now. So the vehicle to authorize
2 this is a water resource development act.
3 So once that happens, then you have to get
4 the funding. And that's Congress.

5 Okay. Now to the issues and concerns.
6 The team and I worked together for a couple
7 weeks. We sat in a room and used the
8 whiteboard and came up with several comments
9 and questions we've heard the most about,
10 the comments that we thought were the most
11 vocal. And we wanted to address those
12 tonight and tell you what we think our
13 opinion is on those. And then we can move
14 from there with questions and comments.

15 The ones we're going to address tonight
16 is, first, to the changes in salinity,
17 salinity impacts, freshwater wetlands, grass
18 beds, fish and shrimp, mitigation,
19 monitoring, confined blasting -- we did a
20 presentation separate at the Jacksonville
21 Public Library. We had a senior biologist
22 from the Corps. She did a tremendous job
23 explaining the confined blasting -- bank
24 erosion, study schedule, and the 45-day
25 public review period. I've kind of already

1 talked about that. We've extended that.
2 But that was a lot of comments and questions
3 we received.

4 Changing in salinity. How will the
5 proposed deepening affect salinity levels?
6 We have completed, along with Taylor
7 Engineering, hydrodynamic modeling that
8 predicts a small increase in salinity levels
9 within the St. Johns River mainstem.
10 Increase is small in comparison to other
11 factors that can influence salinity such as
12 drought, ocean level, sea level rise,
13 et cetera. The tributary modeling that was
14 requested is still ongoing, but the effects
15 are expected to be minor.

16 So what's an example of the salinity
17 that we're talking about? We're using the
18 Buckman Bridge. Everybody can pretty much
19 relate to where the Buckman Bridge is.
20 Without project, average salinity we're
21 seeing is 2 parts per thousand. That's
22 without the project. The with project
23 average, salinity increase is less than 0.1
24 parts per thousand, okay. An extreme dry
25 year, we had a measurement of an average

1 salinity of 7.3 parts per thousand. So you
2 can see natural-occurring events in the
3 river are producing salinity levels higher
4 than our project will, okay.

5 Salinity impacts and echo system,
6 wetlands, grass beds, fish and shrimp. How
7 will the increase in salinity affect the
8 St. Johns River echo system? Again, working
9 with Taylor Engineering, an independent
10 group, we have done ecological modeling that
11 predicts minor mainstem salinity effects.
12 No elimination of grass beds or wetlands in
13 the mainstem. Small increases in salinity
14 induced stress on grass beds and wetlands in
15 comparison to stress levels caused by
16 drought, ocean levels, et cetera. So there
17 we go again talking about
18 naturally-occurring things in the river that
19 are producing more stress than the width
20 project condition will provide.

21 Fish and shrimp modeling is still
22 ongoing. We're working with Taylor
23 Engineering. We're working with the Florida
24 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to
25 study the fish and shrimp modeling to see

1 what those impacts may be. The preliminary
2 results indicate some change in fish and
3 shrimp distribution. One other key thing to
4 mention here on the grass beds, the -- and,
5 Paul, correct me if I'm wrong -- but the
6 closest grass beds that we see with the
7 project is right around River Mile 30 to 31
8 at the Bolles High School. Our project goes
9 to 13, so there are several miles before you
10 even start encountering some of these grass
11 beds.

12 Mitigation options. How will you
13 mitigate salinity effects? We're
14 considering several mitigation options.
15 They include enhancements of the river's
16 water quality, funding nutrient reduction
17 projects such as agricultural storm water
18 and wetland treatment facilities,
19 preservation of wetland and aboort upland
20 habitats, purchase of conservation lands,
21 funding of the Timucuan Preserve
22 environmental management and analysis
23 support, and funding the Florida Fish and
24 Wildlife Conservation Commission Habitat
25 Management Program. These are some of the

1 options in the mitigation plan we're
2 pursuing.

3 Mitigation continued. How many folks,
4 just show of hands, are here with concerns
5 for the Kirkpatrick-Rodman Dam? Okay. All
6 right. During brainstorming options this
7 was brought up. We were looking at hundreds
8 of different options of things we could do
9 as part of mitigation. I want to make sure
10 everybody is clear and they understand the
11 removal of the dam is screened from further
12 consideration due to the complexity of this
13 option. We're unable to evaluate under the
14 supplemental environmental impact statement
15 beyond the scope of this study.

16 What am I saying there? The Rodman dam
17 is not considered part of mitigation.
18 Either taking it out or leaving it in, it's
19 not considered part of this project. It was
20 a brainstorming option, we've eliminated it,
21 okay.

22 The Rodman Dam is a complex issue. It
23 requires extensive environmental and
24 extensive engineering studies. It's well
25 beyond the scope of this project. That

1 would require a separate authorization,
2 separate sponsor, separate reconnaissance
3 report, separate funding. It's not tied
4 with this project.

5 Monitoring. Will the Corps monitor the
6 effects of deepening? We're doing a lot of
7 modeling, but folks say, what if the
8 modeling is wrong, what can you do to insure
9 that the modeling is right or what can you
10 do to check things. The Corps is proposing
11 a long-term 15-year -- approximately 15-year
12 monitoring plan to include placement of
13 water quality monitoring stations in the
14 mainstem and in select tributaries. You can
15 get with Paul to talk about some of those
16 specific areas.

17 Grass beds, wetlands and fisheries
18 monitoring, additional modeling would be
19 performed to determine causes of any
20 observed changes. If anything we've done in
21 the models is higher than what we predicted,
22 we will do additional modeling. Per the
23 adaptive management plan, if effects from
24 deepening are greater than predicted,
25 corrective action may be recommended.

1 Confined blasting. Several folks I've
2 seen were at that meeting. I think Terry
3 Sellers did a phenomenal job bringing up
4 some of those issues. A lot of folks tend
5 to relate to blasting that may have been
6 done in the '60s, '70s to what we do now.
7 Technology has advanced quite a bit. The
8 methods of blasting have advanced.

9 It is likely that confined blasting
10 techniques would be used to deepen the
11 channel, okay. There are several areas that
12 are in rock. Confined blasting techniques
13 that were successfully used, we've done this
14 in Miami, we've done this in San Juan
15 Harbor, and those same type of confined
16 blasting techniques would be implemented
17 right here in Jacksonville.

18 Again, as I mentioned, the blasting
19 methodology has greatly improved since the
20 last time explosives were used in
21 Jacksonville Harbor in the mid '70s. Folks
22 can contest to the Miami project. There are
23 several really delicate environmental
24 features in Miami. We were very careful,
25 and that project was extremely successful.

1 Bank erosion. Will the deepening
2 project cause bank erosion and loss of
3 docks? I've been to several meetings to
4 talk to folks about this. I've been to
5 Heckscher Drive Baptist Church. I've been
6 to several different small meetings, and
7 this is a really large topic of concern.
8 What's our response? The level of erosion
9 or accretion along the banks of the river is
10 highly variable and it's very site specific.
11 What are some of the main contributing
12 factors? Currents, okay. Currents are
13 influenced by tide, watersheds, storms, et
14 cetera.

15 Wave climate, influenced by ship wake.
16 I've heard concern from several people about
17 vessels running outside the buoys. Storms,
18 wind, et cetera. Geomorphology, the shape
19 of the land affected by materials present,
20 et cetera. So what's the evaluation of
21 potential project impacts. The Corps has
22 done extensive and we're continuing to do
23 extensive hydrodynamic current, ship wake
24 and sediment transport modeling are being
25 completed. We've already completed desktop

1 runs of these and we're showing our project
2 will have minimal impact to bank erosion and
3 these other issues. We've done those
4 tabletop exercises. We're continuing that
5 modeling to further verify, but we're
6 showing no impact or little impact with our
7 deepening project. The anticipated channel
8 side slopes and proximity of the channel to
9 the shoreline is also being assessed.

10 And lastly, beneficial uses of dredged
11 material including placing materials
12 adjacent to eroding shorelines is also being
13 investigated. We talked about that, as
14 well, some of the rock material. That will
15 be looked at further when we get to the
16 plans and specs phase of the project.

17 Study schedule. Will everything
18 previously discussed be included in the
19 study schedule? President Obama moved our
20 schedule about 14 months to the left, so we
21 accelerated about 14 months. So several
22 folks said, how are you going to fit
23 everything that you previously discussed
24 into an accelerated schedule. We've put a
25 lot of resources from environmental

1 engineering and everything and economics,
2 et cetera, to make sure that we do
3 everything that was previously discussed in
4 a shorter time.

5 The Corps has prioritized the effort to
6 insure that all technical analysis get
7 completed. Some modeling is pending and
8 will be complete between draft and final
9 publications. Shoaling ADH analysis is due
10 in July. Storm surge modeling is due in
11 July. Tributary salt marsh modeling is due
12 in August. And the USGS groundwater report
13 is also due in August.

14 The key here is all this will come in,
15 it will get put in the final report. Before
16 the chief of engineers signs that report,
17 you remember there was a gap there, we have
18 what we call a state agency review. That is
19 where DEP, fish and wildlife service, U.S.
20 fish and wildlife service, EPA, all these
21 groups are going to have the opportunity to
22 see that final report, see that additional
23 tributary modeling, see all this other
24 modeling to make comments on the final
25 report, all the key agents.

1 Forty-five-day public review period. We
2 see several requests from that. We did
3 extend that. And the new date when the
4 public review period ends, all comments end
5 to Mr. Stodola on July 31st of 2013. So we
6 did extend.

7 Public comments, again, July 31st is the
8 deadline. Comment cards are available. All
9 comments go to Mr. Paul Stodola with the
10 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. His
11 information is here.

12 The report is also available online.
13 You can go download it to the computer. I
14 have it on my iPad where I can scan through
15 it. It's kind of easy to do. Several
16 library locations also have hard copies of
17 the report, the Main library, the Highlands
18 library, Mandarin and Regency. Again, as I
19 mentioned online you can get to the report,
20 as well.

21 So that's all we have tonight. What
22 we're going to do now is open the floor to
23 questions and comments. I would like to
24 request, you know, leave your comments or
25 questions to three minutes, if you can, so

1 everyone has an opportunity to speak. The
2 ones we can answer with the team we have,
3 we'll do so tonight. All of them will get
4 recorded, all of them will go in the final
5 report. So we'll go ahead and start the
6 comment period now.

7 MS. ELLISON: Okay. If you would, if
8 you have a comment or question, line up at
9 the microphone. And also, just a reminder,
10 we do have a court reporter here this
11 evening. So if you could, please state your
12 name for the record so we have it in the
13 report.

14 Also, if there are questions that we
15 can't answer tonight, they will be captured
16 in the report and we will respond to them.
17 Also, after the comment period has
18 concluded, our team members will be at the
19 posters after the meeting is over and they
20 can further answer any questions that you
21 have. And we do have quite a few people
22 here this evening, so we ask that you just
23 please limit your comments to a couple of
24 minutes, to be mindful of that.

25 MR. SPENCER: My name is Spencer,

1 Charles Spencer. I'm here to speak on
2 behalf of the deepening. I'm a resident, I
3 live in Jacksonville. This is my home. I
4 work for the International Longshoremen's
5 Association. I'm the executive vice
6 president of the entire South Atlantic and
7 Gulf Coast District, which encompasses nine
8 states: North and South Carolina, Georgia,
9 Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana,
10 Tennessee and all of Texas.

11 Why I feel that this harbor here, this
12 Port here in Jacksonville should be deepened
13 to 47 feet, number one, of all the ports
14 along the east coast starting in Miami
15 coming up, this is the closest one from the
16 Atlantic Ocean portside. Blount Island's
17 facility is only eight nautical miles from
18 the Atlantic Ocean.

19 Also, Jacksonville has several other
20 things. This Port has three major railroads
21 that run through here. You can offload
22 cargo off a containership today and, in two
23 and a half days, it can be in Chicago.

24 In addition to having the railroads, the
25 Port of Jacksonville has three major

1 highways: Of course, it has 95 that runs on
2 the east coast, right on up to Maine;
3 Interstate 10 begins here in Jacksonville
4 and goes all the way to California, some
5 3,000 miles away; and also, you can spin off
6 of 10 and go up 75 and go through the
7 heartlands of the Southeast United States.

8 I think this project, this deepening,
9 will allow larger ships to come into the
10 Port, goes well for the local economy.
11 Because if you know anything about the
12 economy, we need jobs. Jacksonville has a
13 lot of citizens that live here. And a lot
14 of them spin off of other things other than
15 people who work directly with the Port who
16 make a living to be able to take care of
17 their families in this area, be they are a
18 truck driver or many other things. Fuel,
19 all these ships that come in have to have
20 fuel to go back out.

21 But the main thing, what I'm looking at
22 for this, currently today you have big ships
23 that come here. But the big ships can't
24 come because there is not enough dredged.
25 There is only now around 42, something like

1 that. And but if you go to 47, a ship can
2 come in fully loaded. Now the ships have to
3 come in on high tides only. And that
4 doesn't help any at all because a lot of
5 ships will by-pass the Port if they can't
6 come in with a full load. So those are some
7 of the things. I don't want to take more
8 time.

9 MS. ELLISON: Thank you very much.

10 DR. BODGE: My name is Dr. Kevin Bodge
11 of 336 12th Street, Atlantic Beach. I'm a
12 certified port and coastal engineer with
13 extensive experience in federal navigation
14 projects as the local Jacksonville District
15 knows. And I reviewed the report and I'm
16 afraid that I have found it extremely
17 deficient in detail and in answering the
18 scientific questions that were arranged
19 through the scope of the study. I don't
20 fault the District for this. I fault really
21 the compressed time scale which Washington
22 has forced upon the District with no
23 explanation in its "We Can't Wait" idea.

24 Why? I am no fan of lengthy and
25 expensive federal studies, by any means, but

1 this is a very complicated and very
2 expensive study. Certainly much more so
3 than the Rodman Dam or the Ocklawaha River.
4 It offers certain and irreversible
5 environment damage to Jacksonville if it's
6 built with very uncertain economic benefits,
7 most of those benefits actually accruing to
8 areas outside of Jacksonville. For example,
9 the report's conclusion that blasting and
10 deepening will not adversely affect the
11 freshwater aquifer is based in the report on
12 a 1981 study, 32 years ago. And that study
13 is said to be attached in the report, but
14 it's not. It's not in there.

15 And my question would be how can you
16 hang your hat on a 1981 study that declaimed
17 that increasing the saline wedge in the
18 river will not increase aquifer
19 contamination, when any hydrologist knows
20 that it can. And if there is any updated
21 study past the 1981 report, that would be
22 included in an August release of the study.
23 And that's after the public comment period.
24 To my mind, that does not comply with NEPA
25 because it doesn't give the public the

1 chance to study, to examine that report and
2 comment upon it.

3 The report concludes that deepening will
4 not increase ship wake or bank erosion
5 apparently based on the project's designed
6 vessel. Isn't the point of the project to
7 bring in bigger vessels? And we all know,
8 every engineer knows, that a longer ship, a
9 deeper ship increases ship wake. A 30
10 percent increase in length increases the
11 ship wake by 80 percent operating at speeds
12 of 10 to 15 knots.

13 So we know that will result in greater
14 bank erosion, more turbidity, more loss of
15 the vegetation along the banks, more
16 property damage, ultimately, more riverbank
17 armoring and none of that is acknowledged in
18 the present study.

19 Surprisingly, there is no detail of the
20 long-term cost of channel maintenance.
21 Deepening the channel to 47 plus 2 feet, as
22 requested by JAXPORT, will double, at least,
23 the local cost share responsibility to at
24 least 50 percent. Not to mention just the
25 increased overall cost of maintaining a

1 deeper channel due to shoaling. This will
2 cut the federal cost share for the
3 Jacksonville Harbor Federal Navigation
4 Project in less than half and more than
5 double the local cost share. Why would we
6 do this?

7 I mean, in this report there is no
8 enumeration of the increased project cost to
9 the local government for maintenance over
10 the next 50 years. I mean, if you think
11 that \$383 million of local funds is a lot
12 for the initial construction, just imagine
13 what the increase is in cost to the local
14 sponsor, us, Jacksonville, over the next 50
15 years for a project that will benefit a
16 bunch of shippers in the southeast region,
17 not necessarily Jacksonville.

18 The physical scope of salinity is not
19 enumerated in a way that the public can
20 readily understand. There are graphics, for
21 example, that show the changes or the
22 post-project salinity in bars that are one
23 mile in length and color coded in bands of
24 five parts per thousand salinity.

25 So these color graphics, which are very

1 broad in their resolution, they would
2 suggest, for example, that there would be no
3 change in the salinity at the mouth of Black
4 Creek, for example, if you deepen the
5 channel. Well, that's preposterous. We
6 know that the salinity changes will occur.
7 And it will kill all of the cypress that
8 live along that area. I've seen it at the
9 Cape Fear River Navigation Project, which I
10 worked at also.

11 Overall, the impacts and costs of the
12 project upon the local sponsor in this
13 report are very much underestimated; while
14 the benefits are speculative, at best. I
15 think that too much information is missing.
16 Too much impacts and details are overlooked.

17 All of it has been rushed. The Corps'
18 headquarters wants this study rushed in
19 Jacksonville so that another study, yet
20 another study can sit on their desks in
21 Washington with the great risks inherent to
22 this project sitting in our doorstep in
23 North Florida. Instead of this rush, what
24 I'd ask for is a quality, informed
25 discussion about the project. Thank you.

1 MS. ELLISON: Thank you, sir.

2 MR. JAFFE: David Jaffe, 176 Crossroads
3 Lakes Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.
4 I've prepared a written comment, which I'll
5 read and then submit.

6 With the Army Corps of Engineering
7 recommending a deepening of St. Johns River
8 to 45 feet and approving the local preferred
9 plan to 47 feet, it's important for the
10 citizens of Jacksonville and Northeast
11 Florida to be informed of the meaning of the
12 report and the costs and benefits on which
13 it is based. For that reason, I would like
14 to comment and pose questions on several
15 aspects of the report.

16 First, the Corps measures and defines
17 benefits in ways that probably differ from
18 what the average citizen might expect. That
19 is, for the Corps, the benefits deriving for
20 the deepening project are exclusively and
21 narrowly confined to a reduction in cargo
22 transportation costs. These benefits accrue
23 primarily to shippers and carriers.

24 It is not clear whether there is any
25 necessary or automatic relationship between

1 these kinds of cost reductions and the
2 expansion of the local economy or
3 improvement in the economic quality of life.

4 Second, one of the leading benefits of
5 the deepening project cited by JAXPORT and
6 other advocates is the creation of jobs.
7 According to my review of the report, jobs
8 are only mentioned in one paragraph of the
9 main report under Regional Economic
10 Benefits, a topic that covers only one page
11 of a 338-page report.

12 It is on page 164, which reads as
13 follows: The increased traffic with
14 deepening to JAXPORT is expected to provide
15 regional economic development benefits as
16 follows: Create 22,748 for the 45-foot
17 plan, or 34,508 for the 47-foot local
18 preferred plan in new private sector port
19 jobs in Jacksonville. It should be noted
20 that these numbers are not based on an
21 independent analysis conducted by the Corps
22 but taken from an impact study conducted by
23 Martin Associates, a port consulting firm
24 hired by JAXPORT.

25 These particular job figures cited in

1 the Corps report and the language used to
2 describe the figures are highly misleading
3 and prone to easy misinterpretation by the
4 casual reader. One might conclude that the
5 deepening to 45 feet will generate 22,748
6 new private sector port jobs, while
7 deepening to 47 feet will generate even
8 more, 34,508 new private sector jobs. This
9 would be false.

10 Further, the figures used are the
11 projected job numbers for the year 2035, for
12 which one should have the least amount of
13 confidence given the extended time range and
14 the conditions of economic uncertainty.

15 I would strongly urge the Corps to
16 revise this section of the report so that
17 the numbers cited more accurately reflect
18 the Martin Associates projections for
19 private sector for jobs only and for a year
20 that's closer to the present time. Better
21 yet, the Corps should conduct their own
22 independent analysis of both quantity and
23 the quality of jobs related to and generated
24 by the project as part of the analysis of
25 benefits.

1 Third, the question: Is it conceivable
2 that the deepening project may not produce a
3 significant increase in the quantity of
4 cargo coming to JAXPORT than what would be
5 expected if there were no deepening project
6 at all? Instead the major impact would be a
7 reduction in the cost of moving the same
8 amount of cargo with a smaller number of
9 larger vessels?

10 This was one of the conclusions
11 suggested by the Corps' report for the
12 Savannah Port Deepening Project. That
13 report stated: Increases in the number of
14 containers moving through the port are
15 expected in the future; however, no changes
16 in that growth are expected to occur as a
17 result of deepening the harbor. That
18 expected growth of cargo would occur with or
19 without a deepening project. Would this
20 also be the case for Jacksonville?

21 In the Jacksonville Harbor report, I do
22 not see any cargo tonnage projections or
23 estimates under the various project
24 conditions.

25 Fourth, as it relates to Savannah, do

1 the cost benefit analysis for the
2 Jacksonville Harbor deepening take into
3 consideration the fact that there is another
4 major port less than 150 miles from
5 Jacksonville that currently moves three
6 times more cargo? It is on schedule to have
7 a 47-foot channel ahead of JAXPORT. Is it
8 possible Savannah could be the chosen port
9 of call for the larger ships in the
10 southeast, thus making the St. Johns River
11 deepening less necessary and even redundant?
12 Does it make economic sense to have deep
13 water ports within 150 miles of each other?

14 Finally, the citizens of Jacksonville
15 are interested in what they will gain
16 locally for the costs that are incurred
17 financially and environmentally. It is
18 widely reported by the research that when
19 considering the impact of port investments,
20 the costs, supporting the infrastructure,
21 the environmental impact on the river, air
22 quality, road congestion -- road congestion
23 and reoccurring maintenance of river depth
24 are concentrated locally, while the benefits
25 are disbursed widely throughout the region

1 and the nation. When you refer the report
2 to national economic developments, benefits
3 tending to be more diffuse in nature, is
4 this what you are suggesting, that a
5 significant portion of the benefits will be
6 felt far beyond the geographic location
7 where the port resides and where most of the
8 ongoing costs will be actually absorbed?
9 Thank you.

10 MS. ELLISON: Sir, thank you for your
11 comment. I just want to let you know our
12 economist is here, Idris Dobbs, and he'd be
13 more than happy to speak with you afterwards
14 and hopefully answer some of your questions.

15 MR. JAFFE: Thank you.

16 MR. TURNER: Good evening. I worked
17 with the Corps before, a long time ago. My
18 name is Dan Turner. I used to work for
19 dredging companies and so forth. I have a
20 book here called The River Killers. And I
21 was surprised that you mentioned President
22 Obama saying we just got to get this thing
23 rushed through. There's a comment in this
24 book by another president who also said -- I
25 would like to read it to you, if I may, let

1 me get my glasses on.

2 This is all about the ports and their
3 projects, which they fumbled from the Cross
4 Florida Barge Canal, which is still sitting
5 there, you know, I mean, that was the big
6 black eye for the Corps. Then you got the
7 St. Lucie -- but I mean, there are a number
8 of other projects here.

9 But let me read this, what the Corps
10 said in relation to the environmentalists.
11 I don't know if they're still saying it
12 today or not, but they refer to it as
13 "'Those silly butterfly chasers and
14 self-serving politicians can't stay the way
15 of progress,' snaps one Corps staff
16 official. A Corps spokesman buries his head
17 in his hands and mutters softly 'Those
18 ignorant, misguided, conceited fools, they
19 know not what they say. We are the nation's
20 leading conservationist group because we
21 have conserved the earth by molding it to
22 suit man.'"

23 To get back to the president, what he
24 said was "We must assure that in the future
25 we take not only full but timely account of

1 the environmental impact on such projects.
2 So that instead of merely halting the
3 damage, we prevent it." That was what
4 president said on that, environment. We
5 have to protect the environment and
6 everything.

7 JAXPORT is 21 miles, the channel is 21
8 miles from the terminal out to the ocean.
9 Miami is a lot closer. Ships can run in,
10 because they run on a time schedule. They
11 can run into Miami, get right back out.
12 They can run into Savannah and get right
13 back out. But in Jacksonville they have to
14 go 21 miles.

15 And you know, that's a lot of fuel to
16 burn on a ship, and they're going to be
17 running full speed ahead, full speed at the
18 turn. Like the ships out in Texas, when a
19 ship couldn't make it in the channel, they
20 pump the fuel out of the ship into another
21 smaller ship so they can come in.

22 Now the ships are going to get bigger
23 and bigger and bigger. So we need to
24 rethink this, rethink the project. I mean,
25 look at the damage along the waterways. The

1 docks, when they drove the pilings down in
2 there along the river front, they only put a
3 certain depth to take hold. Now, when the
4 dredgers come in, they go dig out the center
5 of that channel, the bank is going to start
6 falling in. Something has to fill that gap.

7 And who is going to be responsible for
8 the docks falling in? Not the Corps.
9 They're going to blame it on the currents,
10 blame it on the ships and everything else.

11 You know, but that's my little part
12 there. I got some more reports I want to
13 submit in by e-mail. I give you all a copy
14 of the book, anybody who wants a copy of the
15 book. It's all the mistakes the Corps has
16 made over the years, even got the projects
17 from every job that they've ever done. It
18 goes back a little bit further than what you
19 had up on the board there. I thank you very
20 much.

21 MR. HARRAH: Just to clarify, he
22 mentioned River Mile 0 to 21, just for
23 clarification, we're studying from 0 to 13.
24 I just want to make sure everybody is clear
25 about that, the project will be 47 feet from

1 0 to 13.

2 MR. ALIVISO: Thanks for hearing me
3 today. My name is Jim Aliviso (ph). I'm
4 sorry, my throat is a little sore; I've been
5 talking all day. I represent not all but a
6 significant portion of the athletic and
7 environmental community here in town -- and
8 I'm sorry, the athletic and the recreational
9 community here in town. And we spend a lot
10 of time in the water.

11 And you know, after I read the report, I
12 was -- I saw this huge missing piece about
13 the human impact. I don't see human impact
14 in this report at all, ladies and gentlemen.

15 I personally spend a lot of time in the
16 water. I swam two hours in the river
17 yesterday along with a bunch of friends of
18 mine, paddle boarders, kayakers, people that
19 spend a lot of time in the water.

20 So when we're dredging up material for
21 four to six years for 13 miles up river, I
22 want to know, during a nice good tidal
23 flood, like the one we had this weekend with
24 our full moon, and that water rushing down
25 the river, where is that sediment going when

1 we're dredging? And what's under there? Is
2 that in the report? I can ask those
3 questions of Paul later if we can talk about
4 that later.

5 But I want to know what I'm going to be
6 swimming in, what I'm going to be kayaking
7 in. And at the risk of sounding sarcastic,
8 which I don't mean to, when we're doing this
9 construction, are we going to have, like,
10 horses with yellow blinking lights saying,
11 detour, paddlers go here, or how are we
12 going to handle that?

13 So what I would like to see is a human
14 impact study. I want to know what's going
15 to happen to the economy that is built
16 around people that use the river for
17 kayaking, fishing, sporting, swimming, the
18 hotels that we book when people come in from
19 out of town, the restaurants that we fill
20 when people come in from out of town and
21 from other parts of the community. Are we
22 going to lose that?

23 The other thing I want to say is I've
24 been to so many of these things over the
25 years at council, et cetera. And the big

1 sell is always this jobs thing. Everybody
2 wants to try to sell this, the project,
3 because it's a jobs thing.

4 You know, jobs is not the only thing in
5 the world here. We have an environmental
6 thing. And so I'm not convinced -- first of
7 all, in the -- the jobs argument in the
8 paper is really weak, at best. It's a
9 really poor model. It's not convincing at
10 all, and it certainly doesn't sell me.

11 As a matter of fact, I'm more convinced
12 that the economy that we build around the
13 St. Johns River, as athletes and
14 recreational users and hotels and
15 restaurants, has a better predictability
16 factor than any of the stuff we're talking
17 about here.

18 But again, you know, I appreciate the
19 soliciting of our comments. And so what I
20 would like to see is the human study. I
21 want to know what's in the sediment when
22 we're coming down the river during the
23 dredging process, how we're going to handle
24 recreational traffic during those four to
25 six years of use. And I really want to know

1 about this mysterious ocean disposal site,
2 because we swim there, too. That's all I
3 got to say. I'll talk to you later, Paul.
4 Thank you so much.

5 DR. SIMON: Dr. Suzanne Simon,
6 University of North Florida. First, I have
7 a question to which you do not need to
8 respond immediately, but then I would like
9 to provide the rationale for my question. I
10 would like to know how you are going to
11 continue this conversation with the
12 community and receive public comment once
13 the public comment session has ended at the
14 end of July. I have yet to see any
15 mechanisms being developed for that.

16 My concern is that, as this project has
17 continued and the Army Corps of Engineers
18 has done such a wonderful job of trying to
19 keep the public informed about what's going
20 on, the meetings have grown larger and the
21 concerns have become greater. I doubt that
22 you will be able to answer all of these
23 concerns within the next 45 days.

24 If community is truly at the center of
25 your project, as you claim it is, then

1 public mechanisms need to be put in place so
2 that everyone that's in the room here today
3 with us knows that this conversation will
4 continue and the concerns that they have
5 raised will be addressed. Thank you.

6 MS. ELLISON: Thank you.

7 MR. PAGE: My name is Clark Page (ph), I
8 ran a Mayport fishing trawler for a number
9 of years, sold a roll of seafood. Now I'm
10 in the trucking business. I'm not going to
11 make no friends here tonight with the Corps.

12 I just mainly want to talk to all of you
13 that are here that don't really understand
14 what all this stuff they're talking about
15 is. I'm going to make it simple. If you
16 got a bathtub and you fill it up to 20
17 inches of water, you put a mark on the side
18 of the tub where that 20 inches is and then
19 you dig a six-inch hole in the bottom of the
20 tub, the water level in that bathtub drops.
21 It's got to. It has to fill that hole up.

22 If you dig a 47-foot hole in the middle
23 of the St. Johns River, do you know how many
24 rivers we have here, more than any city in
25 the country. All these homeowners, they're

1 going to have nothing but mud behind their
2 houses. Do y'all get that? There is not
3 going to be any water in any of the rivers.
4 The Julington Creek will be mud. And that's
5 another thing. There has been a cutterhead
6 going in this river somewhere since 1975, I
7 know of, every day.

8 My neighbor is 90 years old. He says at
9 the end of Pearl Street at World War II,
10 there was a white sand beach. Ain't nothing
11 there but mud now just like all the rest of
12 the creeks. That's because, if you have a
13 spoon full of Nestle Quik and you put it in
14 a glass of milk and stir it up, it turns the
15 milk brown. Well, if you put all this mud
16 in suspension from a cutterhead, it's going
17 to put mud all over the entire river shift.

18 Now, when I drove up here, I saw Hanjin
19 turning his ship around. He just called on
20 Mitsiwa Port. He had containers all the way
21 as high as the superstructure, so you can't
22 tell me it wasn't loaded. This dredging is
23 a boondoggle, that's all it is.

24 The last thing I want to say is about
25 the container lines themselves. I got a

1 list here. Thirty-five container shipping
2 steamship lines that call on Charleston and
3 Savannah from 1990 to about 2003 when Maris
4 bought out P&O. They got 35 steamship lines
5 up there, and that money is going into their
6 community. We got three here: Puerto Rican
7 Marine, Crowley and Sea-Land. That was
8 during all that time. It's changing a
9 little bit now.

10 But it was where, if you had an orange
11 juice factory and you made orange juice in
12 Bradenton and you wanted to ship it to
13 Paris, your shipment, you had to pay for it
14 to go all the way to Savannah because you
15 didn't have a European connection here. So
16 to you Port Authority guys, I know we got
17 some new people there now, but from 1990 to
18 2000, you all weren't doing a very good job,
19 35 steamship lines in Savannah and
20 Charleston and 3 here. Most people don't
21 realize that. That's it.

22 MS. ELLISON: Thank you, sir.

23 MR. JORDAN: Good evening. My name is
24 Jimmy Jordan. I live at 4831 Mariners Point
25 Drive. I live on Shipyard Creek, which is a

1 tributary, creek that comes off the
2 St. Johns River between my house and Fort
3 Caroline.

4 My concern is that the tributaries of
5 the St. Johns River, from the mouth of the
6 river to at least Julington Creek, are
7 silting in. And every time the river is
8 deepened, they silt in, at the mouth
9 particularly.

10 I'm not against the river being deepened
11 to help the economy, if that's going to help
12 the economy to bring in more jobs. I know
13 that is a question mark there.

14 But not, but not do this at the
15 sacrifice of disallowing the people of
16 Jacksonville, who have lived here all their
17 life, not to have use of navigable
18 waterways. My creek, three hours either
19 side low tide, you cannot get in. You can
20 walk across, it's dry land at low tide and
21 for several hours during the day. It used
22 not to be that way.

23 Your chart that you showed earlier
24 showed that, at the turn of the century, in
25 1900s, the depth of the river was

1 approximately 20 feet. And today it's 40
2 feet, so it's twice as deep.

3 Think about, as you travel down some of
4 the roads around Jacksonville, like
5 Heckscher Drive, the marsh areas. And I
6 know people have an answer for this, but the
7 marsh areas that are marsh now probably were
8 at one time waterways, had water in them.

9 Why? Well, every time we deepen the
10 river, you have a bigger conduit for the
11 water to pass through going south. So the
12 peripheral flushing action going sideways of
13 that water, as it comes from the ocean going
14 south, is not taking place every time you
15 deepen the river, it passes the least
16 resistance down the middle of the river and
17 not have to go out sideways. That flushing
18 action that used to take place is not taking
19 place anymore and everything is silting in.
20 That and/or if there is more flow in the
21 deeper channel, flowing faster in the
22 channel, where is the turbid, the sediment
23 going to settle, percolate out. It's going
24 to percolate out at the sides of the slower
25 moving river channel, and silt in the mouths

1 of all these tributaries.

2 Couple of cases in point, I've lived
3 here all my life. I was born here.
4 Sometimes I think I'm a rare breed when I
5 talk to people. But here in Jacksonville,
6 Florida, I've lived on the river all my
7 life.

8 Couple examples, Broward River, used to
9 be St. Regis, now it's Seminole Kraft, I
10 believe, that operates the paper mill there.
11 They used to have ships that would
12 transport, bring in, import and export paper
13 goods, wood and things by ship, barge,
14 tugboats to their dock, which is on the
15 other side of the bridge. And you have to
16 really know where you're going today to get
17 into the river from -- I mean, into Broward
18 River from the St. Johns River because it's
19 a narrow, shallow channel from the river to
20 the bridge. I think it gets bigger, deeper,
21 wider on the other side.

22 Here again, the tributary that I'm on,
23 Shipyard Creek, they -- the name Shipyard
24 Creek came from the fact that they used to
25 build small ships in this creek further up

1 the creek than where I'm at. And it's
2 dried, low tide now. It used not to be that
3 way.

4 But another example would be -- I don't
5 know if we have some people with gray hair
6 like me, and y'all may remember, too,
7 well-respected sports writers used to write
8 for the Times Union and the Jacksonville
9 Journal, Buster Finley, Paul Maines, they're
10 both passed away, deceased now. But in
11 conversations that I've had with them and
12 things that I've heard them tell other
13 people, blunt -- I mean, Mill Cove used to
14 have some of the best tarpon fishing in the
15 world, used to have a natural depth of 40
16 feet. Today you'll run a ground if you
17 don't know where you're going at high tide.
18 The tributaries are silting in.

19 And what I would like is if this project
20 takes place and you deepen the conduit, the
21 St. Johns River, so you have more water
22 flowing and the silt and everything piles up
23 on the sides as it's been doing, silting in
24 my creek and all the others, denying people
25 from use of the navigable waterways, which

1 the Corps of Engineers should be, and I'm
2 sure you are, concerned with, I would like
3 for you to have some kind of plan on a
4 regular schedule, whenever these tributaries
5 get silted in becoming not navigable any
6 longer, to deepen them so we can use these
7 waterways that have been here long before we
8 had the Port bringing in ships like they do
9 now. I'm all in favor for the Port's
10 expansion, but not at the risk of denying
11 the citizens of Jacksonville the use of your
12 waterways, okay.

13 MS. ELLISON: Thank you, sir.

14 Just be mindful, we want to take your
15 comments, just limit the time, if you could,
16 so we can insure everyone has a chance to
17 comment that would like to this evening.

18 MR. TAYLOR: My name is James Taylor.
19 I'm a concerned community member. And I
20 have one comment and one question. My
21 comment is I've heard in this presentation
22 it's a community project, but I want to
23 point out that it is not in the interest of
24 the community. It is in the interest of a
25 few shipping lines and construction

1 industries. We are going to spend 380-some
2 million at the least, as several people have
3 pointed out there is probably going to be
4 more cost to local, so 380 of our own,
5 million of our own dollars on this project
6 that may bring jobs. I think we can think
7 of a hundred other projects that would
8 benefit the community in real ways and also
9 provide real jobs. I think disguising this
10 as a community project is a lie and I think
11 that should be pointed out.

12 My question is you talked about how
13 minimal the impacts are going to be. But
14 we've been dredging the river, as you
15 pointed out, for over a hundred years. Did
16 you guys even take into consideration the
17 damage we have already done to the river?
18 How the river is nothing like what it was
19 hundreds of years ago? I mean, we're going
20 to be deepening the channel -- or you're
21 planning on deepening the channel and there
22 might be minimal impact now. What about,
23 coupled with all the other impacts from all
24 the other dredging projects, do you even
25 take into consideration all the damage we've

1 already done? Thank you.

2 MS. ELLISON: Thank you.

3 DR. WHITE: Good evening. Hi, I'm
4 Dr. Quinton White, professor of biology and
5 marine science. I've been studying the
6 river since 1976.

7 For several years I publicly supported
8 having a meaningful community dialogue about
9 the economic benefits versus the
10 environmental impact associated with the
11 harbor deepening project. I anxiously
12 awaited the release of this report.

13 As a community we need to have a
14 positive conversation about any kind of
15 environmental impacts that -- or excuse me,
16 economic impacts of increased number of jobs
17 and other developments that are created that
18 are -- their worth, the degradation of the
19 St. Johns River that will occur.

20 Regretfully, I'm extremely disappointed
21 in the scope and the depth of the study in
22 its present format. The report fails to
23 adequately account for the impact associated
24 with salinity increases that will occur
25 upstream of the channel deepening. The

1 report minimizes the ecological shift in
2 species, populations and communities that
3 will occur. The report does not identify
4 the potential impacts, and I question the
5 accuracy of the model used to make the
6 predictions.

7 It appears the Corps' position is to
8 deny any negative impacts regardless of what
9 reality might be. Report outlines the
10 impact of wetlands and submerged aquatic
11 vegetation. And while I contend that the
12 Corps has minimized the actual scope of the
13 impact, the proposed mitigation is
14 particularly nonexistent. Monitoring is not
15 mitigation. And no amount of monitoring can
16 replace the functional loss of wetlands and
17 SAVs. Buying into a mitigation bank does
18 not adequately offset the environmental
19 impact of the loss of these essential
20 habitats. Again, I found the Corps'
21 mitigation plan is weak and essentially
22 useless in accounting for the loss of
23 habitat.

24 Restoration of Ocklawaha River has
25 potential to provide meaningful mitigation

1 but the Corps has elected to avoid that
2 option in favor of a far less beneficial
3 proposal to purchase land from an
4 unidentified mitigation bank. Purchase of
5 upland conservation habitat is admirable and
6 beneficial to the community as a whole, but
7 it does not provide any functional
8 replacement for wetlands lost as a result of
9 this project.

10 Furthermore, I have to question the
11 overall completeness of the report. A
12 discussion of the impacts to the tributaries
13 is minimal. What is the real impact to
14 property owners along the tributaries? How
15 and where will the dredge material be
16 disposed? What will be the impact of such
17 disposal? What will be the impact of
18 property values due to wetlands loss? I
19 believe there are many questions left
20 unanswered. Thank you.

21 MS. RINAMAN: Good evening. My name is
22 Lisa Rinaman. I'm the St. Johns Riverkeeper
23 and I'm very happy to be here for this
24 discussion tonight. A lot of my points have
25 been already stressed. I do want to do some

1 overarching comments. And one of those is
2 that -- well, first, let me thank you guys.
3 I've had a year and a half now as your
4 St. Johns Riverkeeper and I've had a chance
5 to work with many of you on this project and
6 ask lots of questions. A lot of those
7 questions were deferred to the study. And I
8 am extremely disappointed, as Dr. White had
9 mentioned, with the detail in the study.

10 In fact, I believe the study
11 overestimates the economic benefits and
12 underestimates the environmental impacts and
13 the harm that will be done to the St. Johns
14 River and her tributaries, as well as the
15 mitigation plan offers no net gain, no net
16 benefits to the St. Johns River.

17 But my most -- I guess my deepest
18 concern is the fact, due to the rushed
19 process, the fast tracking of this process,
20 as Eric and I talked about a lot, I feel
21 like you are stripping the public an
22 opportunity to have meaningful public
23 comment in this process. To add on top of
24 that the fact that many pieces of this study
25 are not complete. You mentioned some of

1 them are not going to be complete until
2 August. And as one speaker mentioned, this
3 process ends on July 31st. And the timeline
4 that Jason put up there, there was no
5 mention of additional public comment, no
6 mention of making this draft available. In
7 fact, we won't be able to see it again until
8 the draft is complete. And at that point
9 it's too late to have meaningful public
10 conversation.

11 So I do want to -- you mentioned several
12 of the missing components. But there is
13 more that you didn't mention that are in
14 your report as unfinished and ongoing. And
15 that includes the modeling of fish in
16 communities, water quality monitoring. We
17 have major green algal blooms out there as
18 we speak, major problems. That has not been
19 addressed. Tributaries you did mention.
20 Salt marsh modeling, the ground water report
21 prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey,
22 hydrodynamic modeling, storm surge modeling,
23 coastal modeling, ship wake, all of these
24 things add to erosions and many of the
25 concerns that were addressed tonight.

1 Based on our outstanding concerns on
2 this issue, we have put together a technical
3 team to independently review this study.
4 You heard from many of them tonight. And so
5 we will be having our own public meeting on
6 July 23rd to address these issues, have
7 fuller presentations than the ones you heard
8 from our speakers this evening to address
9 any outstanding questions that we still
10 have.

11 Several weeks away we still hope to get
12 some answers to these questions. We're
13 optimistic we can get some completed studies
14 for our review. We would need a minimum of
15 60 days at the completion of each of these
16 studies to have a meaningful participation,
17 be able to review it and actually have
18 responses and conversation with the Corps
19 that means something to this community.

20 If I can make one point on each of the
21 three areas of concern from an economic
22 perspective. We as taxpayers in Northeast
23 Florida, we have been sold for a number of
24 years now that this is going to bring jobs,
25 it's going to bring jobs. As Dr. Jaffe

1 reported that the only mention of the local
2 jobs, the regional impacts refers to a study
3 that's not attached to the electronic
4 document online. We've asked for the study.
5 We've gotten some slides. We have not
6 received the study itself.

7 And it's not being peer reviewed by the
8 Corps. And it's not being independently
9 reviewed, to my knowledge, by anyone in this
10 community. So it's a report that was prayed
11 for by JAXPORT talking about jobs that's not
12 being reviewed by the Army Corps. So I'd
13 ask how do you hang your hat on that number
14 and how can you look this community in the
15 eye and say these jobs will happen, this is
16 what your 380-million-dollar investment will
17 give you.

18 On the mitigation plan, the mitigation
19 has no net benefit. We've talked about some
20 things, and \$31 million for monitoring. We
21 support data. We want more data for the
22 St. Johns River. Unfortunately, the state
23 cut 60 percent of their water quality
24 monitoring data. So I'm assuming this
25 monitoring study that y'all are serving up

1 as mitigation would replace some of those
2 cuts that our river is suffering from as we
3 speak. And that's not a net gain.

4 In addition, you mentioned that this
5 monitoring, while it gives us data, there is
6 no triggers for real mitigation. And so it
7 would literally take an act of Congress to
8 get mitigation opportunities if this
9 monitoring is showing it's bringing harm to
10 our river, harm to our tributaries, harm to
11 the fish we fish and the waters that we boat
12 and swim in. So that's a major concern that
13 it's just a monitoring plan.

14 We talked about mitigation banks.
15 Again, those are existing wetlands, that's
16 no net gain to the St. Johns River.

17 Conservation lands, purchasing of that,
18 that could have merit but those lands have
19 not been identified so it's hard for us as a
20 community to understand buying conservation
21 land has a net benefit to the river. We
22 talked about green algae blooms.

23 And there is something that's very
24 interesting in the mitigation plan that we
25 desperately need, which is nutrient

1 pollution reduction. Unfortunately, what
2 you're targeting is existing environmental
3 regulations, existing obligations that were
4 set by the state in 2008 that they have not
5 conducted. So you're paying for additional
6 nutrient pollution reduction, which the
7 state is already on the hook for to deal
8 with the nutrient pollution problem not
9 dealing with the problems that are going to
10 be brought to this river, to this community
11 by dredging.

12 In addition to that, in your report it
13 says you all have not found a direct
14 correlation with nutrient pollution and the
15 harm brought to our submerged aquatic
16 vegetation. So you don't even know if
17 that's going to help; it's wishful thinking
18 at best. So we're concerned about that.

19 And then on the environmental side, you
20 all talk about minimal impacts, but if you
21 -- there are several places where you
22 mention total tree mortality. And if that's
23 on your tributary where there is total tree
24 mortality, that's not minimal. We've been
25 promised minimal impacts in the past. And

1 when you look at these tributaries and say
2 "oh and by the way, that study is not done,
3 so we don't know if that's the true impact,"
4 it's major, it's serious, it's something we
5 as a community deserve to know. We deserve
6 to be part of the conversation before this
7 moves forward. So I ask all studies be in
8 place, we have 60 days to review them before
9 this project moves on. Thank you for your
10 time.

11 MR. BRUDERLY: My name is Dave Bruderly.
12 I'm a professional engineer. And I live
13 here in Jacksonville. And I would like to
14 pretty much validate or agree with all the
15 comments I previously heard regarding
16 siltation, water quality, nutrients,
17 et cetera.

18 The St. Johns River system is already
19 highly stressed. It's been stressed by a
20 hundred years of neglect. And we're trying
21 hard to figure out how to reverse that.

22 As a point of fact, I would like to
23 point out to the project manager that the
24 state of Florida funded Post, Buckley,
25 Schuh & Jurnigan some 12 years ago to study

1 the removal of the Rodman Dam. The cost was
2 about \$11 million. Those engineering
3 studies have been done. The documents still
4 exist. There is very little controversy
5 about how that could be done, so that could
6 be considered to be a very credible
7 mitigation in my opinion. You don't need to
8 replicate the work that was done by Post
9 Buckley.

10 But as I point out, the river is highly
11 stressed and doing -- and increasing --
12 (inaudible) -- the channel and increasing
13 the salinity wedge that can flow as far
14 south as Palatka, will do very little to
15 solve the nutrient problem. So that needs
16 to be considered.

17 Now, back in the late 1970s, I was a
18 project manager for water quality studies
19 that the United States Navy conducted as
20 part of the dredging of the St. Mary's River
21 up to Kings Bay for the ballistic-missile
22 submarine program. And as part of that
23 draft and environmental impact statement
24 that the Navy had to do, we conducted about
25 three years of baseline environmental

1 documentation on everything that we could
2 think to do at some 35 years ago, including
3 a very extensive network of water quality,
4 monitoring salinity measurements on
5 activity, dye studies, current meters.

6 And I would challenge the engineers here
7 to go back to that data, if you can find it,
8 because I don't have it, and just do a
9 before and after comparison, go back up to
10 Cumberland Island and just see what has
11 happened to the salinity gradient in the
12 St. Mary's River and the tributaries up
13 there around that area.

14 The channel was dredged to 50 feet. And
15 I think it was increased from 35 feet to 50
16 feet at that time, including hard rock
17 blasting and dredging and riffraff
18 stabilization of banks. And they did a
19 whole bunch of stuff. But the Navy was on a
20 fast track then because we had a cold war
21 going with Soviets and we needed to get
22 complete ballistic-missile submarines out of
23 the sea as quickly as possible.

24 And I would point out that places like
25 Savannah, Charleston were disqualified by

1 the Navy because of the extent of dredging
2 that would have been required to accommodate
3 a 50 feet -- a deeper channel in those
4 places. So I really have questions about
5 the credibility or the viability of the
6 Savannah Harbor Deepening Project, as well,
7 from an environmental standpoint.

8 And last but not least, I would like to
9 make a comment on the shipping side of this
10 thing. I heard the statement that everybody
11 knows that bigger ships are coming. I'm not
12 sure about that. My first container ship
13 was in 1966. It was the SS Mooremack --
14 (inaudible) -- to convert a C4. We ran it
15 to Europe out of New York. I was a
16 midshipman at the U.S. New York Marine
17 Academy. I was in on the ground floor, the
18 container revolution and the sea barge
19 revolution and so forth.

20 And yes, the ships are bigger, but I'm
21 not sure that the economics of the shipping
22 industry are such that it's going to sustain
23 these post-Panamax ships that are currently
24 being planned and projected. And I really
25 think, from a national macroeconomic

1 standpoint, we need to go back and revisit
2 that.

3 But here from Jacksonville, I think we
4 need to look at it at the Port of
5 Jacksonville from the standpoint of where
6 are our markets today and where is that
7 market growth. And if you look at where the
8 cargo is going, the tonnage in, the tonnage
9 out, 61 percent of our cargo goes to Puerto
10 Rico, a lot more to the Caribbean, east
11 coast, South America.

12 And President Obama, who was mentioned
13 earlier, he is in the Dakar, Senegal, today.
14 Dakar was the very first port that I went to
15 in 1966. And I can tell you that the
16 continent of Africa is where a lot of the
17 future is going to be for exports, not
18 imports but exports, of American
19 manufactured goods and some commodities.

20 And I question why this country wants to
21 spend billions of dollars deepening Miami
22 and New York and Norfolk and several other
23 ports to 50 feet. We're going to move a
24 bridge up in New York to accommodate these
25 bigger ships. We're going to spend 3 or 4

1 billion dollars just on the east coast, not
2 to mention the billions we've already spent
3 in Long Beach in Los Angeles, to make it
4 cheaper to import more junk from Asia, more
5 cheap stuff from Asia.

6 Billions of dollars could be spent here
7 in the United States increasing our ability
8 to export materials to manufacture stuff
9 that we can make, create many, many more
10 jobs than what I think we're going to get
11 from having a smaller number of bigger ships
12 coming in to use this Port.

13 And I think that is a very real
14 possibility if this thing were to go
15 through. I just don't see the economic
16 rationale for rushing this thing. I know
17 the President is in a recession, he wanted
18 to create jobs. This was, quote, a
19 shovel-ready project, but I think that was
20 just a political motive and that we should
21 go back and come up with a macroeconomic
22 analysis of not just this project but the
23 whole east coast super ship post-Panamax
24 plan and revisit that as part of the study.

25 And I think that we here at the Port of

1 Jacksonville, and I offer my services,
2 should figure out how do we make our
3 existing traders more cost competitive, how
4 do we serve the Caribbean, how do we serve
5 Puerto Rico, how do we serve Africa, how do
6 we develop Africa, and how do we develop
7 east coast South America markets in ways
8 that will create a whole lot of real jobs
9 and economic opportunity. Thank you.

10 MS. ELLISON: Thank you, sir.

11 MR. HARRAH: I think that concludes the
12 question-comment period. Again, there are
13 five posters over here, economic,
14 engineering, considerations, environmental
15 so all the team members will be back over
16 here again. We can answer some of your
17 questions that you have, so feel free to
18 come over. Thank you.

19 MS. ELLISON: Also, if you want to
20 provide a written comment, there are comment
21 cards at the door. I will collect those if
22 you want to turn those in to me and put your
23 name on it.

24 (Whereupon, the meeting was
25 concluded at 8:18 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E1
2 STATE OF FLORIDA)

3 COUNTY OF DUVAL)

4 I, Amanda E. Robinson, Court Reporter and
5 Notary Public, duly qualified in and for the
6 state of Florida, do hereby certify that I was
7 authorized to and did stenographically report the
8 foregoing meeting; and that the transcript is a
9 true record.10 I further certify that I am not a relative,
11 employee, attorney or counsel of any of the
12 parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any
13 of the parties' attorney or counsel connected
14 with the action, nor am I financially interested
15 in the action.16 Dated this 26th day of July, 2013.
17
1819 _____
20 Amanda E. Robinson, RPR
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25