

ATLANTIC INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY (AIWW) FUNDING

BACKGROUND

The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW) connects Virginia to Florida, providing for a navigable waterway that is vital to this nation's infrastructure. The AIWW is used by many recreational boaters, including those that seasonally travel to and from Florida along with various commercial entities. Congress originally authorized the AIWW to be created and maintained at a depth of 12 feet. Today, however, the controlling depth in the Waterway is often just 8-9 feet and, in some portions, as shallow as 5 feet.

Unfortunately, due to a continuing decline in budget allocations to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the entity responsible for maintaining the AIWW, there is currently a backlog of maintenance projects and the Army Corps of Engineers will need \$38 million to restore the AIWW.

ISSUE

The situation has reached beyond the crisis point and yet President Bush's FY06 budget eliminates all funding for the AIWW. As a result, more sections of the waterway will quickly become unusable and will be forced to close. The U.S. Coast Guard closed the AIWW in December 2003 at Lockwood's Folly Inlet, N.C. because the depth there is less than 3 ft. at low tide. This closing has created serious safety concerns and delays in fuel shipments to military bases along the waterway.

Safety issues are also becoming a more serious concern throughout the AIWW. The recent fatality of a professional Captain in South Carolina illustrates the hazards boaters face when they are forced to leave the AIWW where it is unnavigably shallow and travel the more dangerous ocean. The AIWW is going to close unless it is funded. Please don't allow this to happen.

NMMA POSITION

NMMA is working closely with a coalition of likeminded entities to ensure that Congress authorizes funding for the Army Corps of Engineers for dredging efforts along the entire AIWW.

ACTION NEEDED

Please urge your Member of Congress to provide the funds needed to keep the AIWW an integral component of the nation's transportation infrastructure.