

Council Policy on Marine Transport

Policy Goals: *The Council supports marine transport practices which minimize environmental impacts and address issues related to coastal resiliency. In addition, the Council supports practices for ports and marinas that reduce the input of nutrients and contaminants into the aquatic environment. This policy applies to both non-fishing and fishing maritime vessels and infrastructure.*

General Policies

1. Investments in port and marina infrastructure should include plans that will increase coastal resiliency and resiliency of infrastructure.
2. Where appropriate, smaller marine transport projects should consider opportunities to provide the public with fishing access.¹
3. Activities that require dredging should use best practices for siting and should be designed to avoid the need for frequent maintenance dredging.
4. Sources of excessive sedimentation in the watershed should be identified, and best management practices should be implemented to ensure that actions are taken to reduce or curtail those load sources.
5. Developers should consider expanding existing ports with deep water facilities, to reduce the need for maintenance dredging.
6. Projects which propose the expansion and/or alteration of existing ports/facilities should evaluate other nearby ports/facilities to examine the feasibility of using those in lieu of new construction and dredging.
7. Dredging should not be conducted in areas with sensitive fish habitat such as shellfish beds, fish spawning and/or nursery habitat areas, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), or hard/structured habitat.
8. The placement of maritime infrastructure in or adjacent to sensitive fish habitat should be avoided.
9. Seasonal restrictions and spatial buffers should be used during dredging to reduce adverse impacts on fish spawning, egg development, young-of-year development, and migration periods, and to avoid secondary impacts to sensitive fish habitat.

¹ Contact the state's natural resource management agency to discuss options/opportunities during project development.

10. Best management practices and equipment (e.g., adjust lift speeds, use environmental bucket or hydraulic dredge, avoid barge overflow) should be used to minimize turbidity plumes to reduce adverse impacts of suspended sediments on adjacent benthic resources.
11. The effects of increased boat traffic to an area should be considered when assessing a new dredging project or expanding existing channels. Increases in the volume of boat traffic may require more frequent maintenance dredging, which could produce secondary impacts, such as shoreline erosion, sedimentation, and turbidity.
12. Shade produced by over-water structures can alter aquatic/benthic ecosystems. Guidelines or requirements (state/federal) for over-water structures should be employed to minimize the shade footprint created by these structures. Consideration should be given to the impacts of a structure's height, width, construction materials, and orientation.
13. Testing should be conducted prior to dredging and/or disposal of dredged material to ensure that contaminant levels of sediments do not exceed US EPA or state requirements and standards.
14. Beneficial uses for uncontaminated sediments should be considered when practicable and feasible. Priority should be given to beneficial uses of material that contribute to fish habitat restoration and enhancement, landscape ecology approaches, and includes pre- and post-disposal surveys.

Policies on Operation and Maintenance of Ports and Marinas

1. Management plans for non-point source (NPS) pollution and stormwater management should be integrated into the maintenance and operation of ports and marinas. Management practices should be tailored to the specific issues of each port or marina.
2. Encourage marinas to participate in their state's clean marina initiatives².
3. Marinas should consider using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)³ certification for construction and renovation of buildings and over-water structures.
4. Adequate gas spill response plans and protocols⁴ should be in place for gas production and transportation facilities. These plans should:

² Most states have voluntary initiatives that encourage marinas to adopt environment-friendly business practices to reduce pollution in local waterbodies. For example: <http://www.njcleanmarina.org/> and <http://dnr2.maryland.gov/Boating/Pages/cleanmarina/home.aspx>.

³ For more details, see <http://leed.usgbc.org/leed.html>.

⁴ Consistent with the US Coast Guard, US Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety & Health Administration/HAZMAT, and other state or Federal requirements.

- a. Include the identification of sensitive fish habitat.
 - b. Include methods to track the movement of spills.
 - c. Ensure adequate response equipment is immediately available.
 - d. Allow researchers to have timely access to impacted areas, as needed.
5. Oil-absorbing materials should be used in the bilge areas of all boats with inboard engines. These materials should be properly disposed of to limit the entry of solid and contaminated waste into surface waters.
 6. Facilities should provide a containment and filtering/treatment system for vessel wash down wastewater.
 7. Pump-out facilities and on-shore restrooms should be used at marinas and ports to reduce the release of sewage into surface waters.
 8. The disposal of fish waste or other nutrient-laden material in marina or port basins should be discouraged through the use of public education, signage, and by providing alternate fish waste management practices.
 9. The Council encourages the removal of unnecessary impervious surfaces surrounding port and marina facilities and maintenance of a buffer zone between the aquatic zone and upland facilities.
 10. Marinas should have designated, enclosed work areas boat maintenance activities (e.g., painting, engine repair) and should provide appropriate storage, transfer, containment, and disposal facilities for harmful material (e.g., solvents, antifreeze, and paints), to prevent toxic contaminants from reaching the aquatic environment.
 11. Concrete, untreated wood, or steel dock materials should be used to avoid the leaching of contaminants associated with wood preservatives.
 12. The Council encourages use of anchoring techniques and mooring designs that avoid scouring the bottom habitat from anchor chains. For example, anchors that do not require chains (e.g., helical anchors) or moorings that use subsurface floats to prevent anchor chains from dragging the bottom are some designs that should be considered.