



Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC) 2026 Annual Meeting

Wednesday, August 26, 2026
3:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET

Hutchinson Shores Hotel
3793 NE Ocean Blvd
Jensen Beach, FL 34957

Virtual Meeting Information:

Join by Microsoft Teams meeting

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/218122537772974?p=0aZPh44exKfyGUSz2z>

Meeting ID: 218 122 537 772 974

Password: EZ6Qn3sD

Dial in by Phone:

[+1 816-702-6618,,361461861#](tel:+18167026618)

United States, Kansas City

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID:

361 461 861#

TAB 1:
**Call to Order, Chair's Welcome and Opening
Comments**



Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC) 2026 Annual Meeting Agenda

Date: August 26, 2026

Time: 3:15 PM – 5:00 PM ET

Location: Hutchinson Shores Hotel, 3793 NE Ocean Blvd, Jensen Beach, FL 34957

1. Call to Order, Chair's Welcome and Opening Comments
2. Roll Call
3. Guest Speaker(s)
 - a. Dylan Davis – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) South Atlantic Division (SAD)
4. Agency Updates
 - a. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Civil Works and Regulatory Divisions
 - b. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
 - c. Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND)
 - d. Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce)
 - e. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
 - f. Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
 - a. Approval of August 26, 2025, SEMC Meeting Minutes
 - b. Approval of February 3, 2026, SEMC Meeting Minutes
6. Florida Seaport Transportation & Economic Development (FSTED) Update from the Chair
 - a. SEMC Structure and Formal Committee Voting Membership
7. Federal/Legislative Updates
8. Partner Updates
9. Open Discussion
10. Adjournment

MEETING NOTE: Five or more port directors, appointed by the FSTED Chair, shall serve as the voting members. A majority of voting members constitute a quorum. In addition to the voting members, the Secretary of FDEP (or a designee), the Secretary of FloridaCommerce (or a designee), a designee of USACE, and a designee of FIND shall serve ex officio as nonvoting members.

MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING INFORMATION:

Join Online:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/218122537772974?p=0aZPh44exKfyGUSz2z>

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TAB 2: Roll Call



Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC)

Roll Call

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

Port Authority	Representative
Port Canaveral	
Port Citrus	
Port Everglades	
Port Fernandina	
Port of Fort Pierce	
Jacksonville Port Authority	
Port of Key West	
SeaPort Manatee	
PortMiami	
Port of Palm Beach	
Panama City Port Authority	
Port of Pensacola	
Port of Port St. Joe	
Port Putnam	
Port St. Petersburg	
Tampa Port Authority	
Ex Officio Members (Non-Voting)	Representative
FloridaCommerce	
Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)	
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)	
Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND)	
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	

TAB 3: Guest Speaker(s)

- a. Dylan Davis – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) South Atlantic Division (SAD)

TAB 4: Agency Updates

- a. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Civil Works and Regulatory Divisions
- b. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
- c. Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND)
- d. Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce)
- e. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- f. Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

TAB 5:
Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- a.** Approval of August 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- b.** Approval of February 3, 2026 Meeting Minutes



MEETING MINUTES

SEAPORT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SEMC)

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

2:00 p.m. EST

Zara North Room, Zota Beach Resort, Longboat Key, FL

1. **Call to Order, Welcome:** The Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC) meeting was called to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. EST by Chairman Joshua Revord, Port Director of the Port of Fort Pierce.
2. **Roll Call:** Chairman Revord recognized Emily Fisher, Vice President of Programs & Government Relations at the Florida Ports Council, to call the roll. A quorum was present. Members and other guests present were as follows:

Port Canaveral: Bob Musser, on behalf of Cpt. John W. Murray

Port Everglades: Joseph Morris

Port of Fernandina: Scott Moore

Port of Fort Pierce: Joshua Revord (Chair)

JAXPORT: Nick Primrose, on behalf of Eric Green

Port of Key West: Steven McAlearney

SeaPort Manatee: Daniel Fitz-Patrick, on behalf of Carlos Buqueras

PortMiami: Becky Hope, on behalf of Hydi Webb

Port of Palm Beach: Michael Meekins

Port Panama City: Alex King

Port of Pensacola: Thomas Coggin, on behalf of Lance Scott

Port of Port St. Joe: Guerry Magidson

Port Putnam: Sam Sullivan

Port St. Pete: David Wirth

Port Tampa Bay: Chris Cooley, on behalf of Paul Anderson

FloridaCommerce: Jason Mahon, on behalf of J. Alex Kelly

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT): Lauren Rand, on behalf of Jared W. Perdue

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP): Lainie Edwards, Gregory Garis

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Gretchen Ehlinger

Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND): Janet Zimmerman

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC): Josh Cucinella

Adams & Reese, LLP: Jeff Littlejohn

Florida House of Representatives: Bill Conerly

Florida Ocean Alliance: Lenore Alpert

Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation: Keyna Cory

Florida Ports Council: Mike Rubin, Emily Fisher

3. **Approval of the March 26, 2025, SEMC Meeting Minutes:** Chairman Revord asked for any comments or revisions to the March 26, 2025, SEMC meeting minutes. After no discussion, Chairman Revord

proposed a motion to approve the minutes as stands. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. **Florida Ports Council Update:** Chairman Revord recognized Mike Rubin, President and CEO of the Florida Ports Council. Mike thanked members for their attendance and stated that the meeting will address federal updates, desires by seaport directors to ensure that their voices are heard regarding any changes under the Trump administration with respect to various programs, as well as further discussion on several topics.

5. **Agency Updates:**

- a. **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP):** Chairman Revord recognized both Lainie Edwards, Deputy Director in the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, and Gregory Garis, Program Administrator in the Office of Resilience & Coastal Protection, to give the update for FDEP. They addressed the following updates:

- **New leadership and staffing updates:**
 - Edward Bouza was named as the Chief Resilience Officer under the Governor (will continue to lead the Resilient Florida program).
 - Brett Tubbs left the Office of Legislative Affairs for a new opportunity under Florida's Chief Financial Officer. The new Legislative Affairs Director is Alex Cronin, who was previously the Deputy Director.
- **Resilient Florida:**
 - Application portal is open through 9/1 (Labor Day holiday). Staff is present throughout the week to answer any questions regarding Resilient Florida applications and to assist as needed.
- **Senate Bill 108:** Senate Bill 108 updates the Administrative Procedure Act in Florida Statutes Chapter 120 to require agencies to include a five-year schedule for reviewing their existing rules in their annual regulatory plans. The review ensures rules align with legislative authority, current statutes, proper form, legislative intent, and may require technical or substantive updates, including updated references. Implementation begins this year, with 20% of agency rules reviewed annually, resulting in recommendations for no change, technical change, substantive change, or repeal. Reports are submitted to the legislature annually, and the cycle applies to all new rules going forward.
- **Rulemaking:**
 - Update on the Resilience Florida Rule underway.
 - Webinar scheduled for notice of rule development on September 5.
 - CCCL Armoring Rule (62B-33) is under rule development, and a workshop is scheduled for September 11.
 - If a rule goes through, amendments will be posted on the website.
- **Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area:** An advisory committee, including Lainie Edwards and Gregory Garis, is working to develop and adopt a Management Plan for the Aquatic Preserve. Initial meetings include a virtual session in

early September and an in-person meeting in October, followed by public meetings (two or three, combining in-person and virtual) in early December to gather public comments. Port members can request updates via FDEP communications. While designation as Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) would trigger stricter water quality standards, no timeline or discussion for that change currently exists; the preserve remains classified as an aquatic preserve while the management plan is implemented.

○ **Marine Species Observer Conditions:**

- FDEP is working with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and NOAA to work on marine species observer conditions for permits. The negotiation has been back-and-forth between FDEP, FWC (Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission), National Marine Fisheries Service, the courts, and local sponsors. FWC have developed a standard set of guidelines for their preferred and approved observers but have removed the approval process. This conflicts with the NMFS observation requirements. FDEP is working to address the NMFS observation requirements while being supportive of FWC efforts in implementing the guidelines. Those guidelines are not yet specifically cited in rule on the state's side. As is typically the case, whatever language ends up being agreed upon will likely be implemented for other similar projects going forward.
- **Emergency Bond Order (EBO) Authorization:**
 - Milton is still active until September 26; expirations are extended through the Governor's Executive Order (EO).
 - Nicole and Ian have expired.
 - Debbie and Helene's EBOs remain valid through September 9.
 - EO extensions occur in 60-day increments; updated EO dates are available on the Governor's website and updated EBO dates are available on FDEP's website.
 - SeaPort Manatee has utilized an emergency authorization.

b. **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT):** Chairman Revord recognized Lauren Rand, Seaport Office Manager, to give the update for FDOT.

- Work continues on the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process, the electronic document review platform, but integrating seaport projects has been challenging. The team is considering creating a standalone platform modeled on ETDM, specifically for seaports, but it will take about 2.5 years to develop. In the meantime, discussions are ongoing with ports to clarify expectations for reporting outputs and ensure projects have the information needed for construction completion. Ports feel isolated and need a consistent, predictable, and streamlined process, particularly for NEPA reviews and funding decisions. ETDM could provide a unified platform for alternatives analysis, aligning with federal requirements and existing agency participation.

c. **FloridaCommerce:**

- No update at this time.

- Deputy Secretary Jason Mahon will provide updates at the FSTED meeting on behalf of Secretary J. Alex Kelly.
- d. **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers- Civil Works and Planning Division:** Chairman Revord recognized Gretchen Ehlinger, the environmental branch chief in the planning division for civil works, to give an update on USACE. Ehlinger gave updates on major projects:
 - **NOAA Fisheries:** Awaiting biological opinion from NOAA Fisheries; anticipating receipt in November timeframe.
 - **Water Quality Certificate Application with FDEP:** Hoping to receive water quality certification in November.
 - **Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement:** Looking to publish in September 2026 and hoping to have a signed Record of Decision in October 2026. We have made a lot of progress in the last several months, with the biological assessment going to National Fisheries, and the substantial progress on water quality certification and all the other things that we need to get to that side.
 - **Miami Harbor:** Feasibility study is moving forward.
 - **Tampa Harbor:** Project was authorized in 2024 and we are working through design. We are coordinating proposed changes to critical habitat for manatees with Fisheries & Wildlife Services.
 - Recent NEPA procedures are being implemented. Changes are mostly procedural, emphasizing timeframes and page limits. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents now count figures/tables and should generally be 75–150 pages, with 300 pages for complex projects. Projects already underway follow the old rules (e.g., Port Everglades EIS will exceed 300 pages). There are also expanded opportunities for categorical exclusions, allowing more projects to qualify. The team is reviewing these new exclusions for upcoming NEPA projects.
- e. **Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND):** Chairman Revord recognized Janet Zimmerman, Executive Director, to give the update for FIND. Zimmerman highlighted FIND's grant program supporting derelict vessel removal, providing a 75% funding match. St. Lucie County has removed 5 vessels, with 3 more pending. The program is available to the 12 counties within the Florida Inland Navigation District along Florida's east coast, from Nassau to Miami-Dade.
- f. **Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC):** Chairman Revord recognized Josh Cucinella, Land Use Planning Program Administrator, to give the update for FWC. Cucinella covered the revised marine species observer guidelines and clean comprehensive survey and relocation guidelines.
 - **Marine Species Observer Guidelines:** Previously, for activities like dredging and blasting or other major in-water projects, a marine species observer was required, and the permittee would send proposed observers to FWC to approve. That step is no longer required. Permittees pick someone qualified to do the work and FWC does not need to approve the selection.

- **Clean Comprehensive Survey and Relocation Guidelines:** Released in January 2025. Only for minor, routine projects that may happen within boards and other areas, so not for dredging or similar projects. The guidelines are expected to streamline smaller projects. For larger projects, at this time, regular consultations will be required.

6. Partner Updates:

- a. **AAPA:** No updates, as no attendees were present.
- b. **Florida Ocean Alliance (FOA):** Chairman Revord recognized Lenore Alpert, Executive Director of the Florida Ocean Alliance, to give the update for FOA. Alpert shared details about the Florida Ocean Alliance event on November 5 in Ft. Lauderdale, supported by Port Everglades and others. The conference will focus on the ocean economy and ocean health, featuring a sea-level expert, two engineering firms (including a permitting specialist), and Ocean Exchange startups showcasing innovative solutions. Interested sponsors should contact FOA, and all are invited to register; questions should go to Alpert.
- c. **Florida Recycling Partnership:** Chairman Revord recognized Keyna Cory, Executive Director of the Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation, to give the update for FRP.
 - **2025 Recycling Champion Award:** Nominations are open for awards recognizing companies, organizations, governments, and individuals contributing to recycling and sustainability, including waste reduction, water reuse, energy efficiency, recycling, and related initiatives. Applications are on the Florida Recycling Partnership website with a September 5 deadline. Past winners include Port Tampa Bay. Other ports and their tenants are encouraged to apply.
 - **Norwegian Cruise Lines & Goodwill South Florida partnership:** On October 30, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, Goodwill South Florida, and Waste Management & Recycling Services (WM) are working together to keep valuable items out of landfills while funding life-changing programs for individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employees. This is taking place in Miami.
 - **Florida Recycles Day:** The event is on November 13 at Florida Polytechnic University. It is hosted by the Florida Recycling Partnership and FDEP. There will be a variety of different subject matters covered such as an away-from-home recycling study (which might be interesting to see on cruise ships before they enter port terminals), battery disposal, an innovative food waste pilot program by Publix, and a new recycling facility. Goodwill will be speaking about their partnership with Norwegian Cruise Lines and how they are diverting items from landfills.

7. Open Discussion: Chairman Revord recognized Jeff Littlejohn, Senior Policy Advisor with Adams & Reese.

- a. **FDEP Stormwater Rule:** Stricter water quality criteria take effect at the end of December 2025, unless activities are grandfathered. Seaports benefit from approved port master plans completed before January 2025, with activities consistent with those plans exempt until 2034. Questions can be directed to Littlejohn, and consultants should reference the grandfathering provisions in their planning. Port representatives discussed how master plan documentation affects grandfathering under new DEP stormwater rules. Key points include:

- **Project specificity:** Projects don't need to be listed individually in the master plan; high-level descriptions (e.g., "retain cargo terminals") are sufficient if consistent with the approved plan.
 - **Grandfathering:** Activities consistent with master plans adopted or incorporated by reference before 2024 are generally exempt from the new stormwater criteria. Local adoption by county or planning commission typically satisfies DEP requirements.
 - **Updating master plans:** Updating a master plan does not negate grandfathering for existing consistent activities, but new or redesigned areas may not be grandfathered.
 - **Stormwater rules:** New criteria are 10% stricter for redevelopment and 100% stricter for new development, focusing on nutrient removal (95% for OFWs, 55–80% for standard waters). Non-grandfathered projects are already feeling these impacts. Ports should document consistency with pre-2024 plans to maintain exemptions, while ensuring new projects or updates consider the stricter rules.
- b. Federal Updates (WOTUS, NEPA, etc.):**
- **NEPA:** The Corps is now using the DOT-wide enterprise NEPA procedures (June), which provide uniform standards, streamlined timelines, and narrower scopes, leading to faster and more concise EA (Environmental Assessment)/EIS reviews. Projects already in NEPA prior to June continue under the old process; only new projects will follow the updated procedures. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has limited authority over federal NEPA, effectively placing the Corps in charge of NEPA compliance.
 - **WOTUS:** Most port areas remain fully under federal jurisdiction, but interior waters, ditches, and discrete features (like culverts or salinity control structures) may now sever federal jurisdiction, following the Sackett Supreme Court decision. This limits how far inland federal regulation extends. A simplified WOTUS rule is expected in late 2025 to clarify these changes.
 - **Endangered Species Act (ESA):** The blanket 4(d) rule for threatened species has been removed. Agencies are narrowing the definition of "harm" to exclude habitat modification, meaning ESA restrictions now focus on direct harm to species rather than all habitat impacts. This could reduce permitting constraints but may be legally challenged.
 - **South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion (SARBO):** The Corps is working to allow reliance on SARBO for streamlined project authorization in critical habitats, avoiding project-by-project consultations. Ports are encouraged to submit comments and issues now, even before rules are finalized, to influence agency decisions and ensure congressional and administration attention on port priorities.
- c. Other Issues:**
- **VW Mitigation Trust Fund:** There are leftover funds from the Volkswagen settlement in Florida, originally used for electric school buses. The DEP is currently accepting public comments through September 19 on reallocating remaining funds to new eligible mitigation projects. Potential uses include port electrification, EV infrastructure, charging stations, and heavy-duty vehicle upgrades. Ports could submit a joint

proposal or update prior project submittals to compete for these funds once the total amount available is confirmed.

- **Noise Abatement using Bubble Curtains:** Ports have used bubble curtains for noise abatement during construction, notably on the Carver North project with contractor Orion. The system involved placing a PPC apparatus over pipe piles with the curtain surrounding it. While effective, it was challenging to move between piles. Bubble curtains are innovative, emerging technology with multiple potential applications beyond noise control, including trash containment, oil spill management, and interactive marine programs, though they are not widely commercially available.
- **Sand Bypass Project:** The recent sand bypass project at Port Canaveral, completed in May, moved 1.5 million cubic yards of sand from the north side of the port to beaches on the south, achieving nearly 10 miles of beach renourishment. The project, coordinated by the Corps and contractor Great Lakes, demonstrated successful large-scale sand transfer and was recognized by the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association as one of the four best restored beaches in the country.

8. **Adjourn:** Chairman Revord opened the floor for discussion; hearing none, the meeting was adjourned.



MEETING MINUTES

SEAPORT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SEMC)

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

2:00 p.m. EST

Executive Conference Room, FDOT Burns Building, Tallahassee, FL

1. **Call to Order, Welcome:** The Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC) meeting was called to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. EST by SEMC Chair Becky Hope of PortMiami.
2. **Roll Call:** SEMC Chair Becky Hope, delegate from PortMiami, called the roll. A quorum was deemed not present, as there was no representative from the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) present. Members and other attendees present were as follows:

Port Canaveral: Bob Musser, on behalf of Cpt. John W. Murray

Port Everglades: Alexandra Rangel, on behalf of Joseph Morris

Port of Fernandina: Scott Moore

Port of Pensacola: William Boyer, Thomas Coggin, on behalf of Lance Scott

Port of Fort Pierce: *not present*

JAXPORT: *not present*

Port of Key West: *not present*

SeaPort Manatee: *not present*

PortMiami: Becky Hope, SEMC Chair, on behalf of Hydi Webb

Port Citrus: Steven Baham

Port of Palm Beach: Gary Dunmeyer, on behalf of Michael Meekins

Port of Port St. Joe: *not present*

Port Panama City: *not present*

Port Putnam: *not present*

Port St. Pete: *not present*

Port Tampa Bay: Chris Cooley, on behalf of Paul Anderson

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP): Lainie Edwards, Gregory Garis

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT): Lauren Rand, Jerry Scott

Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC): *not present*

Florida Harbor Pilots Association (FHPA): Geoffrey Pool, Nathan Cook, Gretchen Winters

Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND): *not present*

Florida Ocean Alliance: *not present*

Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation: *not present*

FloridaCommerce: Ava Dillard, Rose Clermont

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Gretchen Ehlinger, Angie Dunn

Great Lakes Dredging Company: Bill Hanson

Adams & Reese, LLP.: Jeff Littlejohn

StrongPort Strategies: Lauren Brand, Roger Bohnert

3. **Approval of the August 26, 2025 SEMC Meeting Minutes:** Chair Hope stated that since a quorum was not met, the item of approval of the past meeting minutes from August 26, 2025 would be postponed until the next meeting in August 2026.
4. **FSTED Update from Chair Revord:** FSTED Chair Revord was not present at this meeting, therefore no update was provided.

5. Agency Updates:

- a. **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP):** Chair Hope recognized both Lainie Edwards, Deputy Director in the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, and Gregory Garis, Program Administrator in the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, to give the update for FDEP. Ms. Edwards and Mr. Garis addressed the following updates:
 - **Local Government Funding Request to Legislature:** The request includes 27 beach projects and 7 inlet projects with a combined request of \$183M. A separate \$50M in recurring funding is pending legislative approval.
 - **Coastal Construction Control Lines (CCCL) Draft Rule Update:** The draft rule update revises coastal armoring conditions to incorporate sea level rise (SLR) and climate change. There will be no change [for ports] unless ports are applying for the coastal armoring seaward of CCCL. For public infrastructure, the draft rule update changes the vulnerability storm interval from 15 years to 25 years, representing less stringent criteria. There is no change for vulnerability storm interval applicable to private homeowners. The draft rule update includes minor Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) clarifications related to tenting and definitions for post-storm armoring updates. The draft rule update also facilitates rebuilding/updating armoring post-storm. It is not yet published in the Florida Administrative Register (FAR).
 - **Resilient Florida:** The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 statewide resilience plan was submitted on December 1, 2025, with 123 eligible projects and \$100M in funding. The FY 2025-2026 grant awards were announced in December 2025 and included 73 projects, totaling \$20M. Project categories included vulnerability assessments, nature-based feasibility plans, pre-construction plans, reduced cost share eligibility plans, and real-time flood forecasting plans. FY 2025-2026 regional resilience entity grants were announced for 11 regional planning councils and estuary programs, totaling \$2M. The 2026 application portal is expected to open July 1 and close September 1 for planning and implementation. The combined dashboard for statewide vulnerability/sea level impact projection tool launched in 2025. The Florida Adaptation Planning Guidebook was updated in 2025.
 - **Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Aquatic Preserve:** The Coral Reef Conservation Program is currently gathering public feedback on the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Aquatic Preserve draft management plan and comments are open through February 6.
 - **Hurricane Executive Orders:** The Hurricane Milton Executive Order (EO) has been extended and now expires on March 24, 2026. Activities qualifying under the EO or Emergency Final Orders (EFOs) may continue.
 - **Turbidity Rulemaking Status:** FDEP reported no current push for turbidity rulemaking; recent discussions indicate no movement.
 - **Marine In Water (Protected Species) Observer Permissions:**
 - **Remark from Bob Musser of Port Canaveral:** Mr. Musser stated that Port Canaveral has requested clarification regarding new changes to the wildlife observer species rule referenced in recently released guidelines from FDEP.

- **Response from Gregory Garis (FDEP):** Mr. Garis explained that FDEP has been coordinating closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and that both agencies have agreed on updated permit language. He said a permit including the negotiated language was expected to be issued within a day. He added that this agreement should allow the department to move more quickly on other permits. He noted, however, that the current language is not expected to be the final resolution, and that the broader goal is to streamline and standardize permitting language across multiple areas while a more permanent fix is developed.
 - **Remark from Bob Musser of Port Canaveral:** Mr. Musser said that, from the Port's perspective, there has been ongoing dialogue among USACE and FWC, but implementation details remain unclear at the staff level. He explained that there is uncertainty about how the new conditions should be applied, particularly by FWC staff. He stated that the rule removes FWC staff from the review loop for protected species observer submittals, which he described as a significant concern for USACE. He said the port has been working with department staff to resolve confusion around the process and noted that responsibility for reviewing observer qualifications and experience now falls on the permittee. He added that a staff member developed a review matrix and said the port is willing to share that resource.
 - **Response from Gregory Garis (FDEP):** Mr. Garis responded that the department plans to coordinate further with FWC on how best to implement and communicate the new conditions. He characterized the current language as an interim measure and said additional refinement is expected. He added that a follow-up call would be worthwhile and expressed interest in reviewing the matrix developed by the port.
- **Petroleum Clean-Up Program:**
 - **Remark from Port of Pensacola:** A representative of the Port of Pensacola asked whether FDEP could provide guidance on the petroleum cleanup program. They stated that the port has been coordinating with the department and would appreciate direction on where to obtain information regarding investigation status and current petroleum level assessments affecting port properties.
 - **Response from Gregory Garis (FDEP):** Mr. Garis responded that FDEP can provide the Port with direct points of contact for assistance. He explained that petroleum cleanup inquiries fall primarily under the Department's Division of Waste and advised the port to send an email to FDEP so the request can be routed to the appropriate staff.
- b. **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT):** Chair Hope recognized Lauren Rand, FDOT Seaport Office Manager, to provide any updates. Ms. Rand stated that updates will be shared by Secretary Jared W. Perdue and Ms. Rand at the FSTED meeting on February 4, 2026.

- c. **FloridaCommerce:** Chair Hope recognized Ava Dillard to share any updates. Ms. Dillard stated that updates will be shared by Secretary J. Alex Kelly at the FSTED meeting on February 4, 2026.
- d. **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):** Chair Hope recognized Gretchen Ehlinger, Environmental Branch Chief in Planning Division for Civil Works, and Angie Dunn to provide the update for USACE. Both Ms. Ehlinger and Ms. Dunn provided status updates on major projects:
 - **Miami Harbor Deepening Feasibility Study:** Awaiting information from headquarters, team is reviewing HarborSim modeling and potential turning basin expansion.
 - **Port Everglades Supplemental Environmental Impact Study (EIS):** Efforts are ongoing; USACE is in close coordination with National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) and FDEP for the final biological opinion and water quality certification. Current environmental requirements are challenging and may deter bidding.
 - **Tampa Harbor Deepening:** The project was authorized in the recent Water Resources Development Act (WRDA); funds were received for further design toward construction. The engineering team is proceeding with the project.
 - **Jacksonville Harbor Deepening:** Operation and Maintenance (O&M) dredging continues as expected.
 - **Questions:**
 - **Question from Port of Pensacola:** A representative of the Port of Pensacola asked whether there was a status update on the port's High Performance Center of Excellence Dock Center project.
 - **Response from Angie Dunn (USACE):** Ms. Dunn stated that the matter falls within the Regulatory Division of the USACE. She said she could coordinate with Shawn Zinser to obtain an update and provide a response.
- e. **Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND):** No update shared, as no representatives of FIND were present.
- f. **Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC):** No update shared, as no representatives of FWC were present.

6. Partner Updates:

- a. **AAPA:** No update shared, as no representatives of AAPA were present.
- b. **Florida Ocean Alliance:** Mr. Littlejohn shared an update on behalf of Lenore Alpert, representative of the Florida Ocean Alliance. Florida Oceans Day is February 17-18. There is a flyer that will be distributed to attendees. Anyone in Tallahassee during those dates is welcome to attend, especially ocean-adjacent stakeholders.
- c. **Florida Recycling Partnership (FRP):** Mr. Littlejohn stated that Keyna Cory, representative of the Florida Recycling Partnership, was attending a legislative meeting and was unable to attend today.

7. **Guest Speaker Bill Hanson from Great Lakes Dredge and Dock:** Chair Hope recognized Mr. Hanson, Senior Vice President of Market Development at Great Lakes Dredge & Dock (GLDD) Company, to speak. Mr. Hanson provided background information on the company, which is based out of Houston, Texas. The company has worked with many Florida ports.
- **Capitol Updates:** Mr. Hanson reported that the Executive Director of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) stepped down at the end of 2025 and that a national search for a successor is currently underway. He expressed confidence in AAPA's future leadership and emphasized the importance of maintaining strong relationships with the federal administration, regardless of political party. Mr. Hanson stated that his presence in Tallahassee was related in part to the Florida Maritime Partnership. He noted that GLDD offers itself as a resource to state agencies supporting disaster recovery operations, particularly in the context of the Jones Act. He shared that GLDD has participated in emergency response operations in recent years and encouraged ports to engage dredging contractors directly when dredging support is needed. As a publicly traded company, GLDD typically participates in publicly advertised bidding processes. He also noted that GLDD has served on advisory committees with the USACE and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
 - **Intersection with USACE:** Mr. Hanson noted that the Maritime Administration (MARAD) is an important federal partner for GLDD and expressed interest in seeing expanded grant funding opportunities within MARAD-administered programs.
 - **Port Projects:** Mr. Hanson highlighted the PortMiami deepening project as a notable success, explaining that it marked the first time the port was dredged without the use of blasting. He stated that GLDD is closely following the Port Everglades project and is currently coordinating with the port and USACE. He noted that a decision to bid will depend on final project requirements and contractual conditions.
 - **New Dredges:** Mr. Hanson reported that GLDD recently initiated a new dredging project at Amelia Island.
 - **Questions:**
 - **Question from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn asked whether Florida's past concerns about not receiving a fair share of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund at the national level have now been resolved.
 - **Response from Bill Hanson:** Mr. Hanson responded that the situation has improved and said funding equity has largely leveled out through the treatment of donor ports and energy ports within the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund framework.
 - **Question from Chris Cooley of Port Tampa Bay:** Mr. Cooley asked about workforce challenges tied to an aging maritime labor force in the Tampa region and possibly statewide. He requested insight into what the private sector is doing to attract new talent from across the country.
 - **Response from Bill Hanson:** Mr. Hanson said that GLDD has been actively working to modernize and attract new workers, noting that a new generation

is moving into company leadership. He explained that the company has developed a remote operations center in Houston that allows teams to monitor dredges around the clock, making operations more technology-driven and appealing to new entrants. He added that the company partners with maritime academies, labor unions, hopper dredge operators, and seafarers unions to recruit employees, while maintaining a strong safety culture. He also noted that the company supports a dredging laboratory at Texas A&M University, which he described as the only dredging-focused school in the United States.

- **Question from Chris Cooley of Port Tampa Bay:** Mr. Cooley also asked whether the company is seeing national trends related to the beneficial reuse of dredged materials.
 - **Response from Bill Hanson:** Mr. Hanson said the company is very engaged in beneficial reuse efforts. He stated that USACE pursued beneficial reuse practices even before the 70% rule, though it did not always receive formal credit. He said the 70% threshold helped elevate and focus the discussion. He emphasized that the most successful reuse projects occur when local stakeholders bring forward project concepts, permits, and funding rather than relying solely on USACE to lead.
- **Question from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn asked whether, given shifting definitions of Waters of the United States and changes in state water quality certification rules, the company is closely tracking regulatory developments in Washington, D.C., and whether it is engaged in the rulemaking process.
 - **Response from Bill Hanson:** Mr. Hanson responded that the company has been involved in broader permit reform discussions and has learned that permitting timelines are often too long, making fast-tracking strategies important. He noted there has been congressional activity on permit reform and that the National Governors Association has an active permit reform subcommittee. He highlighted strong engagement from the governors of Oklahoma and Pennsylvania, who he said are particularly focused on reform due to major infrastructure challenges in their states. He added that permit reform discussions are most productive when ports and project sponsors clearly state what outcomes they want and bring specific proposals forward.
- **Question from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn said he appreciated that perspective and asked whether the company views the recent surge in activity as implementation of the broader regulatory reform initiative to formalize new rules.
 - **Response from Bill Hanson:** Mr. Hanson said yes, without question, and added that there is a noticeable sense of urgency among federal agency staff to move regulatory reform measures into effect.

8. **Updates to Federal & State Rules from Jeff Littlejohn:** Chair Hope recognized Mr. Littlejohn to provide updates on federal and state rules.
- **Waters of the United States:** There is a shifting definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) stemming from a draft definition promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps. Public comment closed on January 5. The State of Florida signed on to a coalition letter that weighed in on the draft. The effect on seaports is probably relatively limited. We are dealing with traditionally navigable waters for the vast majority of activities. However, there are examples like ditches, which have been recharacterized under the draft rule. On-port conveyances that are not directly connected to tide, that don't have to pass through a discrete feature, may no longer be subject to USACE permitting. Ports would still need to get state permits but would no longer need to get federal permits. Where that ditch was once part of a natural conveyance (replaced a creek, etc.), that would likely remain federally jurisdictional. This will likely be changed again and will be subject to litigation. Updates will be provided regarding any changes.
 - **Questions:**
 - **Question from Port of Pensacola:** A representative of the Port of Pensacola asked whether the referenced rule would affect a water feature located within a port's public access area.
 - **Response from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn stated that classification as WOTUS is not determined by ownership or whether a feature is located inside or outside port property, but instead by the characteristics of the water feature itself. He explained that when ports evaluate on-site water features or plan development, the need for a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is often a critical factor, since federal permits typically take longer to obtain than state permits. He said the narrowing of the WOTUS definition has significant effects across Florida, but because most ports are adjacent to traditionally navigable waters, the overall impact on port areas is generally limited. He added that the ruling more directly affects wetlands and, in most cases, does not broadly apply to core port facilities.
 - **Question from Port of Pensacola:** The port representative then asked whether the ruling would avoid affecting inland waters.
 - **Response from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn clarified that inland waters can still be affected, but jurisdiction has been significantly narrowed. He said rivers would remain under Corps jurisdiction, while more remote or intermittent features — such as wetlands or drainage areas that only convey flow after rainfall — are largely excluded under the revised approach. He noted that the rule has been promulgated but not fully finalized and that draft language repeatedly emphasizes that wetlands protections are intended to fall primarily under state authority rather than federal oversight, with navigable waters remaining under Corps jurisdiction.

- **NEPA:** Mr. Littlejohn noted ongoing shifts in direction at the federal level, including implications from several recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions clarifying that Congress did not grant the Executive Office of the President specific authority to independently administer NEPA, and that implementation authority resides with individual federal agencies. He further reported that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued an interim final rule in the prior year rescinding its existing NEPA regulations. As a result, primary responsibility for NEPA implementation has shifted more directly to federal agencies. Subsequent guidance issued in late 2025 included recommendations to executive branch agencies as they develop and implement updated agency-specific NEPA procedures. Mr. Littlejohn emphasized that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) plays a significant role in NEPA implementation and noted the introduction of revised procedural parameters, including the establishment of time limits and page limits for NEPA documents.
 - **Remark from Gretchen Ehlinger with USACE:** Updated guidance has been received from the Department of War (DoW) regarding NEPA implementation for DoW and Civil Works projects. Under the new direction, standalone NEPA procedures will not apply to DoW projects and Civil Works activities. While the overall procedural framework remains largely consistent, revised requirements establish page limits for Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), and those limits now include figures and tables, which were previously excluded from page counts. It was further noted that any project requiring an EIS must be elevated to Civil Works for approval. The current approach emphasizes preparation of EAs unless significant impacts are identified that cannot be mitigated. Additionally, expanded flexibility in the use of categorical exclusions was highlighted, allowing more projects to remain within the EA framework and streamline review. The presenter acknowledged that numerous procedural updates have occurred over the past year and indicated that efforts are ongoing to fully implement the revised requirements.
- **Questions:**
 - **Question from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn inquired whether USACE or other agencies have received updated guidance following the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision addressing the “separate time and place” doctrine and the narrowing of consideration of secondary and tertiary effects. He referenced the Court’s holding that, in certain contexts, agencies may not consider indirect or downstream impacts—such as secondary effects associated with a proposed power plant—when those effects fall outside the proximate scope of the federal action under review. Mr. Littlejohn asked how this narrowing of secondary impact analysis may affect NEPA implementation and whether USACE has adjusted its review practices or received formal direction in response to the decision.
 - **Response from Gretchen Ehlinger with USACE:** Ms. Ehlinger responded that she is unsure if it is codified in USACE guidance specifically, though the Corps

is looking at it and no longer using cumulative effects or foreseeable actions. USACE is looking at the impacts of the specific project.

- **Endangered Species:** Mr. Littlejohn provided an update regarding recent regulatory changes under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). He reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) jointly released four rules affecting implementation by the USACE. At a high level, the rules modify the process for listing species and designating critical habitat. The stated intent is to clarify and tighten the criteria used in those determinations. Mr. Littlejohn explained that the revised definitions narrow the scope of what qualifies as critical habitat by focusing more directly on whether the species is actively using the habitat and whether that habitat is essential to the species' life cycle. He further noted that the rules include species-specific provisions related to the establishment of threatened and endangered species listings, as well as revisions to the Section 7 consultation process intended to streamline federal review. Collectively, these changes are characterized as efforts to expedite federal decision-making. A significant procedural change involves the definition of "take." Historically, under Section 7 consultation, both direct take (e.g., killing or harming a species) and critical habitat modification could constitute a prohibited take, triggering additional consultation requirements. Under the revised rules, critical habitat modification has been removed from the regulatory definition of "take." As a result, an impact must now be directly tied to the species itself, rather than solely to its habitat, to trigger certain consultation requirements. Mr. Littlejohn indicated that this represents a further narrowing of ESA applicability in the context of federal review. He concluded by noting that not all rule changes are fully implemented at this time but that, overall, the direction of the revisions is toward streamlining federal review processes, including those with potential implications for port projects.
- **Questions:**
 - **Question from SEMC Chair Becky Hope:** Are any in place?
 - **Response from Jeff Littlejohn:** No, all were proposed in late 2025. So, there is time before these bills survive and are challenged.
- **Queen Conch Habitat:** Mr. Littlejohn reported that Adams & Reese understands that projects are starting to move forward in Queen Conch-designated habitats. He indicated that the prior barrier to project approvals in these areas appears to have been addressed, and that consultation framework guidance has now been promulgated. While this development suggests progress, Mr. Littlejohn noted that it remains unclear whether the revised process is operating efficiently in practice. He further stated that the USACE had three projects proceed through the updated framework prior to the Port Everglades project. A newly appointed official is expected to address these matters moving forward.
- **Clean Water Act Section 4 Water Permitting:** Mr. Littlejohn reported that a new rule under the Clean Water Act was promulgated in January addressing water quality certification regulations. He explained that these regulations govern the process by which states review federally permitted projects and provide the required water quality certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Act. Under the prior framework, states were permitted to review the

broader activity associated with a federal permit and could impose conditions addressing a range of project-related impacts. The revised rule narrows the scope of state review authority to discharges into waters of the United States. As a result, states may comment on and condition certifications only as they relate directly to discharges, rather than the broader project activity. Mr. Littlejohn noted that the changes were prompted, in part, by concerns that certain states had imposed conditions viewed as extending beyond water quality considerations, which created delays and controversy, particularly in northwestern and western states. The revised rule is intended to clarify and limit the scope of state authority under the certification process.

9. **Florida Legislative Session Update:** Jeff Littlejohn continued on to updates on the state legislative session.
- **Background:** Mr. Littlejohn reported that the Legislature is currently in Week 4 of Session. While there has been significant discussion regarding the potential for an extended session, he indicated that it remains too early to determine whether an extension will occur. He noted that tax policy disagreements and extensive lobbying activity are influencing legislative negotiations. Adams & Reese continues to distribute a weekly tracker of seaport- and environmentally related bills that are advancing. Members were encouraged to notify the firm of any relevant legislation not currently being tracked.
 - **SB 558 by Sen. Dominguez (Stormwater Systems Standards):** Mr. Littlejohn explained that SB 558 would require certain stormwater systems to comply with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) specifications and inspection requirements. Concerns have been raised regarding applicability to non-transportation projects, such as parks and other local infrastructure. While many local governments apply FDOT standards to transportation facilities, they often use different standards for other infrastructure types. Adams & Reese anticipates either that the bill will not pass or that it will be amended through a committee substitute to provide additional flexibility. Potential impacts to ports would depend on the applicability of municipal stormwater standards.
 - **SB 1422 (Surface Waters and Coral/Seagrass Impacts):** In its original form, the bill required habitat equivalency analysis and included provisions mandating independent turbidity monitoring and full cost responsibility for permittees. Mr. Littlejohn reported that these provisions were removed in the committee substitute. The bill designates coral reefs as “critical natural infrastructure,” which has prompted concern regarding potential unintended consequences, such as the classification of corals on seawalls as reef systems. Adams & Reese is monitoring the bill for further amendments or potential reintroduction of previously removed provisions.
 - **SB 848 by Sen. Truenow and HB 1457 by Rep. Gonzalez Pittman (Stormwater Treatment Compensation):** Mr. Littlejohn stated that the original version of this legislation would have eliminated certain third-party compensating stormwater treatment mechanisms utilized by some ports, while ports implementing their own compensatory projects would not have been directly affected. Due to substantial stakeholder opposition, a compromise proposal is under

discussion to preserve existing mechanisms. Monitoring continues, particularly regarding any reinstatement of more restrictive provisions.

- **HB 479 by Rep. Maggard and SB 718 by Sen. McClain (Land and Water Management Preemption):** Earlier versions of the bill proposed broad state preemption of local regulations. The current version narrows the focus to standardizing wetland setback requirements statewide at 25 feet, replacing local standards that range from approximately 30 to 100 feet. The proposal remains controversial in several counties, though passage is considered likely. Adams & Reese has advised ports to engage local legislators regarding potential exemptions from duplicative regulation.
- **SB 1220/DOT Package & Seaport Provisions:** Mr. Littlejohn reported that SB 1220 includes proposed amendments to Section 311, Florida Statutes, requiring ports to incorporate identification of critical infrastructure, including electricity, fuel, and water systems, into their 10-year strategic plans, along with components addressing durability and supply chain continuity. The bill also directs FDOT to coordinate with FloridaCommerce, ports, and federal partners on key maritime supply chain components to support expansion of Florida's maritime industrial base. FloridaCommerce is currently soliciting input regarding census tracts at or near Florida ports for potential inclusion in a maritime-focused economic development package. Stakeholders have been invited to provide comment. Mr. Littlejohn noted that the seaport-related provisions are generally supported
- **Questions:**
 - **Question from Chris Cooley of Tampa Bay:** Mr. Cooley of Port Tampa Bay asked whether, in the context of off-site stormwater treatment, there might be an opportunity for the port to assume responsibility for the entire pond system rather than managing only a portion of it.
 - **Response from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn responded that House sponsor Representative Gonzalez Pittman represents the area and is aware that, as currently drafted, the bill would limit ports' ability to use additional stormwater treatment credits, including credits associated with FDOT ponds, unless the port assumed responsibility for and operated the system itself. He explained that Port Canaveral provides its own stormwater treatment for on-port projects, while Port Tampa Bay typically purchases credits on the marketplace. He noted that the proposed language would restrict ports like Port Tampa Bay from utilizing those marketplace options.
 - **Question from Chris Cooley of Port Tampa Bay:** Mr. Cooley of Port Tampa Bay asked whether the proposed local preemption bill related to environmental regulations would apply retroactively to existing local ordinances or actions.
 - **Response from Jeff Littlejohn:** Mr. Littlejohn responded that, as originally drafted, the bill would have immediately shut down local Environmental Protection Commissions (EPCs). However, he explained that as amended, the bill would be more limited in scope and would primarily affect local wetland setback regulations. He stated that the earlier version would have eliminated

environmental regulatory programs in jurisdictions such as Hillsborough County, Miami-Dade County, Broward County, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee, noting that many cities and counties operate their own environmental regulatory programs. He added that, in the bill sponsor's view, the intent of the legislation is to eliminate perceived duplication between state and local environmental oversight.

- **Remark from Chris Cooley of Port Tampa Bay:** Mr. Cooley of Port Tampa Bay stated that ports often have broader regional impacts and expressed concern that the proposed preemption approach could limit the ability of local authorities to influence or prevent project approvals. He suggested that reducing local regulatory authority may shift decision-making away from communities most directly affected by port-related development.

10. Open Discussion: Chair Hope opened the floor for discussion.

- **Lauren Rand (FDOT Seaport Office):** Ms. Rand announced that the next SEMC meeting will be held either August 25th or August 26th in Fort Pierce. The goal is to have SEMC meetings together on the days of FSTED and Security meetings. All legislative meetings from now on will take place in Tallahassee, as today's meeting did. Port members are encouraged to use the new FSTED website, which contains all resources and meeting information. The website is a comprehensive tool that can be used to prepare for meetings. FDOT is currently working to put together a more standard email distribution list and will be reaching out to port members regarding the email list.

11. Adjournment: Chair Hope adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m., hearing no other comments during the open discussion item on the agenda.

TAB 6:

**Florida Seaport Transportation & Economic
Development (FSTED) Update from the Chair**

- a.** SEMC Structure and Formal Committee Voting
Membership

TAB 7: Federal/Legislative Updates

TAB 8: Partner Updates

TAB 9: Open Discussion

Ocean and Space Convergence Summit

Where industries intersect to shape Florida's future.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2026

10:30 AM - 3:00 PM

BREVARD ZOO, MELBOURNE

Convening thought leaders, policymakers, industry experts, and advocates to explore innovative solutions for Florida's coastal challenges and opportunities.
Thought leader panelists include:



**Keynote Speaker
Michael W. Sole**

Former U.S. Marine,
Secretary, FDEP
& VP Environmental
Services
NextEra Energy, Inc.



Captain John Murray

CEO
Canaveral Port Authority &
Port Director, Port Canaveral



Rob Long

President & CEO
Space Florida



Lynda Weatherman

CEO
Space Coast Economic
Development Commission



Dr. Colin Polsky

Acting Director
FL Office of Ocean Economy
Professor Geosciences, FAU



Samantha Miles

Executive Director
Vertex Applied Innovation Hub
Florida Tech



Paul A. Sohl

Rear Admiral
United States Navy (ret) &
CEO Florida High Tech Corridor

TAB 10: Adjournment