

# F S T E D

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Florida Seaport Transportation and  
Economic Development Council

## **Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC)**

**Wednesday, March 26, 2025  
9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. EST**

**Hotel Indigo Tallahassee  
*Cypress Room*  
826 W Gaines St, Tallahassee, FL 32304**

**[Join the meeting now](#)**

**Meeting ID: 225 385 757 68**

**Passcode: p7F7ur3o**

# F S T E D

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Florida Seaport Transportation and  
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## Seaport Environmental Management Committee AGENDA

Wednesday, March 26, 2025  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
*Cypress Room*  
Hotel Indigo, Tallahassee, FL

1. Call to Order, Welcome
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of the August 28, 2024, SEMC Meeting Minutes
4. Florida Ports Council Update
5. Agency Updates
  - a. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
  - b. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
  - c. FloridaCommerce
  - d. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Civil Works and Regulatory Divisions
  - e. Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND)
  - f. Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
6. Partner Updates
  - a. AAPA
  - b. Florida Ocean Alliance
  - c. Florida Recycling Partnership
7. Guest Speaker – Dr. Bill Precht  
“Ten Years Later: The Port Miami Deep Dredge Project Reveals Valuable Lessons Learned to Help Guide Future Projects”
8. Open Discussion
  - a. Rice’s Whale and Right Whale Speed Rule Update
  - b. FDEP Stormwater Rule
  - c. Federal Updates (WOTUS, NEPA, etc.)
  - d. Other Issues
9. Adjourn

**TAB 1**  
**Call to Order, Welcome**

**TAB 2**  
**Roll Call**

# F S T E D

Florida Seaport Transportation and  
Economic Development Council

## Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC)

### Roll Call

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Representative	Organization	Designee
Captain John Murray	Port Canaveral	Bob Musser
Joseph Morris	Port Everglades	Erik Neugaard
Scott Moore	Port Fernandina	Rossana Hebron
<b>Joshua Revord (Chair)</b>	Port of Fort Pierce	
Eric Green	JAXPORT	Nick Primrose
Steven McAlearney	Port of Key West	
Carlos Buqueras	SeaPort Manatee	Daniel Fitz-Patrick
Hydi Webb	PortMiami	Becky Hope
Michael Meekins	Port of Palm Beach	
Alex King	Port Panama City	
Thomas Coggin	Port of Pensacola	
Sam Sullivan	Port Putnam	
David Wirth	Port St. Pete	
Guerry Magidson	Port of Port St. Joe	
Paul Anderson	Port Tampa Bay	Chris Cooley
Lainie Edwards Alex Reed Gregory Garis	Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)	
Lauren Rand Jerry Scott	Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)	
James Stansbury Jason Mahon	FloridaCommerce	
Shawn Zinszer Jason Spinning Angela Dunn Gretchen Ehlinger Jamie Howard	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	
Janet Zimmerman	Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND)	
Josh Cucinella	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)	
Jeff Littlejohn Patrick Gillespie	Adams and Reese, LLP	

**TAB 3**  
**Approval of the August 28, 2024, SEMC**  
**Meeting Minutes**

# F S T E D

## Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council

### Seaport Environmental Management Committee

#### MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

9:00 a.m. CST

Pensacola Hilton Garden Inn

- 1. Call to Order, Welcome:** The Seaport Environmental Management Committee (SEMC) meeting was called to order at approximately 9:03 a.m. CST by Chairman Joshua Revord, Port Director of the Port of Fort Pierce. Chairman Revord welcomed attendees and noted that today's meeting would include updates from key agencies, environmental discussions, and discussions on regulatory changes impacting port operations.
- 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:

Bob Musser, Port Canaveral  
Erik Neugaard, Port Everglades  
David Anderton, Port Everglades  
Joshua Revord (Chair), Port of Fort Pierce  
Nick Primrose, JAXPORT  
Dan Fitz-Patrick, SeaPort Manatee  
Becky Hope, PortMiami  
Fred Wong, PortMiami  
Debra Owens, PortMiami  
Alex King, Port Panama City  
John Miller, Port Panama City  
Clark Merritt, Port of Pensacola  
Steven Baham, Port Citrus  
Gregory Garis, FDEP  
Lauren Rand, FDOT  
Jerry Scott, FDOT  
Charles Castagna, FDOT  
Ava Dillard, FloridaCommerce

Angela Dunn, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
Jeff Littlejohn, Adams and Reese, LLP  
Keyna Cory, Florida Recycling Foundation  
Lenore Alpert, Florida Ocean Alliance  
Emily Fisher, Florida Ports Council  
Mike Rubin, Florida Ports Council  
Edie Ousley, Yellow Finch Strategies  
Jimmy McDonald, HNTB  
Madeline Jones, HNTB  
Fred Aeuschauer, Lewis, Longman, & Walker  
Gretchen Winters, Florida Harbor Pilots  
Rod Coddington, Aptim  
Branden Villanova, MARAD – USDOT  
Katy Salamati, Marcmann Solutions  
Chris Martin, Burns & McDonnell  
Scott Chewning, Burns & McDonnell

- 3. Approval of the January 30, 2024, SEMC Meeting Minutes:** Chairman Revord asked for any comments or revisions to the January 30, 2024, meeting minutes. Bob Murray (Port Canaveral) requested that the Green Marine Program update be added to the minutes. After no further discussion, Bob Musser made a motion to approve the minutes with this addition; then seconded by Clark Merritt and passed unanimously.
- 4. Florida Ports Council Update:** Chairman Revord recognized Mike Rubin, President and CEO of the Florida Ports Council, to give a brief update on legislative and regulatory challenges facing Florida

# F S T E D

## Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council

seaports. Rubin emphasized that infrastructure funding will be a key issue with rising costs for dredging, security, and environmental compliance, ports were advised to advocate for additional funding through the Florida Legislature and to engage early with committee members overseeing transportation and environmental policy.

### 5. Agency Updates:

- a. **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP):** Chairman Revord recognized Gregory Garis, Program Administrator in the Office of Resilience & Coastal Protection, to give the update for FDEP. Garis provided updates on several regulatory developments impacting Florida's ports. The 404 Assumption Program, which affects federal permitting for wetlands, remains on hold pending appeal, with no immediate changes for port projects. The Resilient Florida Grant Program, aimed at funding climate resilience projects, is accepting applications until September 1, 2024, and ports were encouraged to apply. He also discussed the newly designated Coral Reef Conservation Area, which has not yet been classified as Outstanding Florida Waters—a designation that would impose stricter water quality standards. A significant concern is the recent listing of the Queen Conch as a protected species, which has already delayed dredging projects in South Florida. FDEP is working with NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) to clarify mitigation requirements, but as of now, no formal guidance has been issued, leaving ports uncertain about future project timelines.
- b. **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT):** Chairman Revord recognized Lauren Rand, Seaport Manager, to give the update for FDOT. Rand provided an update on the Efficient Transportation Decision-Making (ETDM) process, a new initiative that allows ports to integrate their projects into FDOT's environmental screening system. This will help identify potential regulatory conflicts early, reducing permitting delays. Pilot ports participating in the ETDM rollout include PortMiami, Port of Fort Pierce, SeaPort Manatee, and Port Tampa Bay. She also highlighted ongoing security investments, noting that \$1 million in security grants had been awarded to Florida's ports, with funds allocated for access control, cybersecurity enhancements, and surveillance upgrades. FDOT is continuing its partnership with ports to ensure infrastructure projects move forward efficiently while meeting environmental and security requirements.
- c. **FloridaCommerce:** Chairman Revord recognized Ava Dillard, Partnership Manager in the Office of Partnership Engagement, to give the update for FloridaCommerce. Dillard announced that the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund still has \$37.8 million available for shovel-ready infrastructure projects, and ports were strongly encouraged to apply before funding runs out. She emphasized that projects that enhance job creation, workforce development, and economic growth will receive priority consideration. With increased legislative support for supply chain resiliency, FloridaCommerce is also working on new economic development initiatives that align with seaport expansion efforts. Ports looking to expand cargo-handling facilities, improve logistics infrastructure, or upgrade workforce training programs were encouraged to submit funding proposals.
- d. **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Civil Works and Regulatory Divisions:** Chairman Revord recognized Angie Dunn, Chief, Planning & Policy Division at USACE Jacksonville, to give an



# F S T E D

## Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council

update for the U.S. Army Corps. Dunn provided updates on ongoing and upcoming dredging and port expansion projects. The Tampa Harbor Deepening Project recently received final approval, with 70% of dredged material set for beneficial reuse. The Port Everglades Expansion Project is moving through the NEPA review phase, with final approvals expected soon. Meanwhile, the Miami Harbor Expansion project has encountered delays, prompting the Corps to request an extension for additional planning and environmental review. One of the biggest challenges facing port projects is the recent listing of the Queen Conch as a protected species. This has already resulted in costly delays for dredging projects in South Florida, as contractors are now required to conduct conch surveys and implement mitigation measures. USACE is working with NMFS to establish clear guidance, but until then, ports should prepare for additional regulatory hurdles when planning dredging operations.

- e. **Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND):** No update, as no attendees were present.
- f. **Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC):** No update, as no attendees were present.

### 6. Partner Updates:

- a. **AAPA:** No update, as no attendees were present.
- b. **Florida Ocean Alliance:** Chairman Revord recognized Lenore Alpert, Executive Director of the Florida Ocean Alliance, to give an update. Alpert provided updates on several initiatives aimed at strengthening Florida's ocean economy and environmental conservation efforts. She announced the establishment of the Office of Ocean Economy at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), which was created to support emerging maritime industries and legacy sectors such as seaports, though it currently lacks state funding. FOA is organizing an Ocean Economy Leadership Event in Fall 2024, featuring industry leaders and policymakers discussing topics such as coastal resilience, marine research, and economic development. Additionally, FOA will be hosting Ocean Day in Tallahassee on March 31–April 1, 2025, with scheduled legislative discussions, networking events, and a fish fry hosted by the Florida Institute of Oceanography. Seaports were encouraged to participate in these events, as they provide opportunities to advocate for maritime and environmental policies.
- c. **Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation:** Chairman Revord recognized Keyna Cory, Executive Director of the Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation, to give an update. Cory highlighted ongoing sustainability efforts within Florida's seaports and the broader business community. She emphasized that the Recycling Champion Award nominations are open until September 6, 2024, and encouraged ports to nominate themselves or tenants engaged in sustainable waste management practices. She praised Port Tampa Bay, which received a previous award for its environmental initiatives, and noted that seaports play a crucial role in recycling materials such as scrap steel, aluminum, and cooking oil from cruise ships. Additionally, the foundation is working with partners like DEP and private corporations to expand statewide recycling education initiatives. She invited seaports to attend Florida Recycles Day on November 15, 2024, at the Patel College for Global Sustainability at the University of South Florida, which will cover topics such as textile recycling, battery disposal,

# F S T E D

## Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council

and landfill capacity. Seaports were encouraged to participate in these sustainability programs to enhance their environmental impact.

- 7. Legislative Update:** Chairman Revord recognized Jeff Littlejohn, Senior Policy Advisor at Adams & Reese, to provide an update on the current environmental legislation. Littlejohn provided updates on several legislative and regulatory issues impacting Florida's seaports. One of the most pressing concerns is the proposed Right Whale speed restrictions by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which would expand seasonal speed limits to vessels over 35 feet, eliminating previous exemptions for port pilots and cargo vessels. The self-reporting requirement and the removal of the safety exemption raised concerns, as pilots could be held criminally liable for exceeding speed limits, even under hazardous conditions. Legal challenges are expected once NMFS finalizes the rule, and Florida's ports may join an amicus brief opposing the regulation. Regarding the Rice's Whale listing in the Gulf of Mexico, NMFS is considering designating the entire Gulf as critical habitat, which could introduce additional operating restrictions on vessels. A recent lawsuit by environmental groups has further pressured NMFS to tighten protections under the Endangered Species Act, and future litigation is anticipated. On a separate regulatory front, new Clean Water Act stormwater rules took effect on June 28, 2024, with more stringent performance standards for stormwater management beginning in December 2025. Ports were advised to review grandfathering provisions to determine whether existing permits could be exempt from the new requirements. Additionally, federal regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are evolving, with greater emphasis on climate justice and environmental impact considerations, which could result in longer review times for federally funded port projects. The Florida Legislature will reconvene in March 2025, with Senate President Albritton expected to introduce environmental and infrastructure initiatives, and ports were encouraged to engage early with lawmakers on funding priorities.
- 8. Open Discussion:** Chairman Revord opened the floor for discussion.

  - a. Rice's Whale and Right Whale Speed Rule Update:** Discussion centered on the operational and legal risks posed by NMFS's proposed rules. Concerns were raised about the lack of coordination with stakeholders, enforcement uncertainty, and the potential economic impact on cargo shipping and pilot operations. Ports were urged to document any operational delays or financial burdens related to these restrictions to support future legal challenges.
  - b. FDEP Clean Waterways Act Stormwater Rulemaking:** Jeff Littlejohn provided insights into new stormwater permitting requirements, which will become more stringent by December 2025. While projects permitted before that date may be grandfathered, significant modifications to existing stormwater systems could trigger compliance with the new rules. Ports were advised to engage with FDEP early to avoid unexpected regulatory hurdles and to consider using redevelopment provisions, which offer a less stringent compliance pathway.
  - c. Federal Updates (WOTUS, NEPA, etc.):** Discussion focused on the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule and recent Supreme Court rulings that have complicated federal wetland permitting. While the Sackett decision was expected to limit federal jurisdiction, EPA's interpretation of the ruling remains inconsistent, leading to uncertainty in permitting

# F S T E D

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## Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council

decisions. Ports were encouraged to closely review jurisdictional determinations and consult with legal experts when navigating federal wetland regulations. Regarding NEPA updates, new regulations emphasize environmental justice, climate change assessments, and community engagement, which could increase project review times for federally funded port improvements.

- d. **Other Issues:** Bob Musser (Port Canaveral) announced that Port Canaveral is preparing to launch its next major sand bypass project, which will restore sand to southern beaches along Cape Canaveral and Cocoa Beach. The project is 100% federally funded and will use dredged material to replenish eroded shorelines. The port has secured low-bid contractors, and work is expected to begin in early 2025. Also noted, Port Canaveral successfully implemented a new stormwater management system, which uses real-time monitoring and control technology to improve runoff management. The port is now working with DEP to determine how compensatory stormwater credits can be applied to future projects. Other ports were encouraged to explore stormwater credit trading opportunities as a potential cost-saving measure for environmental compliance.
9. **Adjourn:** Chairman Revord opened the floor for discussion; hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m. Ports were reminded to submit funding applications for stormwater and resilience projects and to stay engaged in advocacy efforts regarding federal and state regulations. The next SEMC meeting is scheduled for early 2025, with updates to be provided as legislative and regulatory changes unfold.

**TAB 4**  
**Florida Ports Council Update**

# **TAB 5**

## **Agency Updates**

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

**TAB 6**  
**Partner Updates**

- a. AAPA**
- b. Florida Ocean Alliance**
- c. Florida Recycling Partnership**

## **TAB 7**

**Guest Speaker – Dr. Bill Precht**

**“Ten Years Later: The Port Miami Deep Dredge  
Project Reveals Valuable Lessons Learned to  
Help Guide Future Projects”**

## **TAB 8**

### **Open Discussion**

- a. Rice's Whale and Right Whale Speed Rule Update**
- b. FDEP Stormwater Rule**
- c. Federal Updates (WOTUS, NEPA, etc.)**
- d. Other Issues**



**TAB 9**  
**Adjourn**