



We are Save Our Shores (SOS) Saco Bay, a 501(c)4 issue advocacy group to mitigate shoreline damage of our beaches. Our request to you is a dredge purchase due to the sandy beaches of York County being pounded into submission. The \$40 million in funds going to York County through the American Rescue Plan is an opportunity to do something to stem the tide. The ask of \$1.8 million for a dredge, transport and support boat is less than 5% of the county allocation. A dredge purchased by the county is a huge first step to a Southern Maine coastal protection plan. Here are summary points of why the time is now to purchase a dredge:

- ✓ County action on Climate Change: We talk and talk, with study after study, with no tangible action on protection against rising sea level and coastal erosion. With no other obligation, a county purchase of a dredge sets the table for an action plan.
- ✓ Re-start, continuation of SMPDC regional planning of dredge operation: Communities have already begun the process of detailing dredging needs, prepare for future dredges, under the Southern Maine Planning Development Corporation (SMPDC) 2017-2018 analysis (included in packet)
- ✓ ARP funds need to be decided/allocated now, and a dredge only represents <5% of county fund allocation, but benefitting potentially all coastal municipalities

Further, we would like to counter some of the reasons to discourage a dredge purchase

- ✓ 'This is not an allowed use of ARP funds': ARP funds can be used for "infrastructure", more specifically "**green infrastructure projects**". Treasury's guidance states that these funds can be used for **aid to impacted industries**. "Aid to tourism, travel, hospitality, and other impacted industries that responds to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency."
- ✓ 'York County does not operate to purchase and run a dredge': The opioid crisis was certainly not in the county's original formation and mission but rose to the challenge. A purchase of a dredge outside of the county budget funding could be the start of a new county led initiative, or the match lit for regional proactive action toward the climate crisis.
- ✓ 'This is the State's or municipality's problem': The county covers the most affected communities in Southern Maine, and not one municipality will purchase a dredge on their own. It is mostly a York County problem

A dredge would help move sand to badly eroded shoreline areas and opening channels and outlets to the ocean. We know beaches to our south have had long delayed Army Corps dredges, and there will be future delays in critical times ahead. In our immediate area, most Saco Bay beaches are losing sand at an alarming rate: more than 60 feet has been lost at Ferry Beach State Park since 2000. Camp Ellis Beach barely exists at high tide. Almost the entire southern coast is losing sand and the ramifications are far reaching. GooseFare Brook is clogged and creating a wastewater problem.

York County's beaches are the lifeline of the county's economy. Tourism brings in over half a billion dollars here. We all saw the damage to that economy caused by Covid-19. The loss of jobs and revenue from the pandemic may be an indication of future summers if something is not done. Without vital and healthy beaches that economy is in jeopardy. Take the sand from the beaches and take the beaches from York County and the tourist industry would be lost.

A dredge opens the door for a beach management plan to relocate sand where it came from. We can dredge areas of accretion and keep our waterways clear for boaters and fishermen. Furthermore, an opportunity exists to work with southern Cumberland County coastal areas. The Scarborough River channel is dredged at a cost \$5 million every five years. Higgins Beach is suffering noticeable erosion. Sand is the antithesis of erosion, and we need it - badly, desperately.

Thank you for your consideration. Included in this packet is our Powerpoint presentation of Dredge cost, the 2017-18 SMPDC study for regional dredge needs and use and a regional commission proposal once a dredge is purchased. There are also Letters of Interest from shoreline communities included or coming to you directly.

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