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CORPS LISTENING SESSION

1. The Corps needs to develop, in cooperation with the states, an inlet management plan and policy to ensure that the valuable sand resources are recovered during maintenance dredging and new construction operations and returned to the nearshore berm or beach.
2. There is fragmented federal authority with regard to ports with a complete lack of coordination and leadership. Although the Corps has a direct mandate to perform maintenance dredging and for new construction, such as deepening and widening projects, it is not the sole lead federal agency in dealing with ports. The Coast Guard has responsibility for navigational aids as well as "Captain of the Port" functions, Customs, Agriculture and INS also have responsibility relating to security, collection of duties; the Department of Transportation and the Federal Maritime Commission also have roles relating to port access and tariffs. The Corps needs to take a greater advocacy role with regard to ports. The federal government needs to set up a steering committee in Washington as well as at the regional and/or state level to assess the needs of the port systems with the objective of providing the same budgetary support to ports as the FAA provides to airports.

As an example, it is predicted that globalization of markets will result in the doubling of seaborne cargo in the next decade. Neither the rails nor I-95 on the east coast nor the rail system and I-5 on the west coast can handle this projected increase in volume. The I-95 and I-5 corridors are already overburdened with truck and container traffic. To avoid an inordinate expenditure to widen these north-south routes, as well as to optimize the cost of shipping by reducing the length of the overland leg, additional coastal shipping will be required as well as hub and spoke systems such as being planned in Freeport. Again, what federal agency is tracking these developments to ensure ports ability to accommodate this requirement? Do the ports have the land, berths and intermodal access to accommodate this surge in demand?

3. The Corps has long been a leader in coastal engineering, but again does not take an advocacy role as evidenced by FEMA going to the Heinz Center for advice on erosion control problems. Again, a lack of coordination of federal agencies at the Washington level.