

House Republican Press Release

January 16, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Miller: Connecticut's Seaports Neglected



Dredging Policy Needed to Preserve Connecticut's Economy, Reduce Energy Costs

HARTFORD- State Representative Larry Miller (R-122) today called for the state to develop a comprehensive, forward-thinking dredging policy which would have a tremendous benefit to the state's economy, industry, and

energy consumption and costs.

"As far as I can tell, the state of Connecticut has no real policy for dredging our ports and harbors," said Representative Miller. "The neglect we have subjected these ports and harbors to by failing to properly remove sediment and silt from rivers that fill these basins has made many of them shallow, and resulted in economic loss for the state."

Miller noted that the recent federal spending bill allocated \$738,000 for disposing dredge material from the main channel in Bridgeport Harbor, a long neglected industrial hotspot. "That's a good start," said Miller. "Bridgeport has already lost Turbana, a long-standing tenant, due to rising energy costs and the fact that larger vessels are no longer able to dock at Seaview Avenue.

In New Haven, Connecticut's busiest port, Miller said that the Cross-Sound electrical cable lays across the bottom of the main channel leading into the harbor. "Not only are the ships in danger of possibly catching that cable on an anchor when they enter the harbor should a problem occur with the vessel, but the cable presents a problem for dredging if needed," Miller said.

According to Miller, the Housatonic River in Stratford has filled in with silt and can now cause hazardous conditions for fuel barges going in to the Milford Utility. In Norwalk, ships cannot enter the harbor to deliver oil that is now being delivered by smaller boats or trucks. This increases transportation costs for by 25-30% which is passed on to electric ratepayers.

"Without a comprehensive, structured dredging policy, Connecticut will continue to freeze out larger vessels from their ports, as silt settles and creates shallower drafts for major shipping," said Miller. "The alternative to shipping is trucking, which pollutes our air more heavily, costs all of us a great deal more, and creates an additional burden for Connecticut's already crowded transportation infrastructure."