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August 12, 2022

Lt. Col. Ramon Brigantti
Commander
US Army Corps of Engineers—Philadelphia District
100 East Penn Square
The Wanamaker Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3323

Dear Lt. Col. Brigantti,

I reach out to you today regarding a very time-sensitive safety issue currently unfolding at the Manasquan Inlet in my Congressional District.

I remain appreciative for the work you and your team have done over the years to keep the area safe for boaters. As you are aware, the Government Dredge Murden was dredging the Manasquan Inlet as recently as last week to clear shoaling at the entrance to the inlet. However, since that time, the shoaling against the jetty on the south side of the inlet has reached never-before-seen levels. At lower tides there is currently a sandbar in this very highly trafficked inlet, and the situation is changing every day.

I have spoken with well-respected members of the boating and fishing community, as well as local elected officials such as Point Pleasant Beach Mayor Paul Kanitra, and they all express their deep concern that this matter could continue to escalate and have devastating consequences.

Specifically, I am told that at high tide today there was at least one spot in the federal channel that was only nine feet deep. As you know, some of the vessels in the local commercial fleet require up to 12 feet depth, leaving them at risk of grounding. Should that happen, it would be both very dangerous and extremely costly.

Equally concerning is the fear that under stormy conditions, the sand bar will be very dangerous to vessels. Under fair weather conditions, boats can steer clear of the sand bar, but with a 25-knot wind pushing them around, it will be very dangerous—especially if the sandbar continues to grow at the current rate.

Based on these concerns and understanding that the safety and viability of recreational, for-hire and commercial vessels is of utmost importance at all times of the year and especially during these last few weeks of summer when inlet traffic is at its peak, I respectfully request that the Army Corps take immediate corrective action to mitigate this potentially dangerous navigational hazard.

I stand ready to assist in any way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith", is written over the printed name.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress