



Port Everglades Navigation Improvement Program (PENIP)

Issue Summary

To retain Port Everglades as a port of national significance, PENIP, led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), is a project to deepen and widen the Port's navigational channels and turning basins. The investment cost of this project, which in FY24 exceeded \$1.35B, is not just about addressing safe shipping requirements, but also about further boosting economic activity at the Port, the state of Florida, and the entire United States. Decades of delays have forced the port to turn away business today that would benefit the community and our national supply chain. Nearly half of the construction cost of this project will be allocated to minimizing, mitigating and monitoring during construction to reduce environmental impacts. The USACE and Port Everglades has proposed the most extensive coral mitigation effort and the largest coral restoration project in the United States' history.

Full Detailed Background

The need for the PENIP was anticipated more than 29 years ago, in 1996, when Congress authorized a detailed investigation which showed the project was technically feasible, environmentally acceptable, and provided cost effective economic benefits to the country. The project was authorized for construction in the Water Resources Development Act of 2016, and its authorization was increased in the Water Resources Development Act of 2022. More than \$20 million in New Start construction funding was provided to the project in the Fiscal Year 2021 USACE Work Plan. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) officially started the review process to issue a necessary biological opinion (BO) for the USACE project on May 16, 2025.

Global business partners have built vessels that are so large in length and width that for Port Everglades to remain competitive, we must deepen and widen the Outer Entrance Channel from its existing 45-foot depth and 500-foot channel width to a 55-foot depth (plus 1-foot required and another 1-foot allowable over depth for a total 57 feet) and 800-foot width for a flared channel that extends 2,200 feet seaward. Deepen the Inner Entrance Channel and Main Turning Basin (MTB) from 42 feet to 48 feet (plus 1-foot required and another 1-foot allowable over depth for a total 50 feet) Widen the section of the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) called the Southport Access Channel (SAC) that extends from Berth 23 to Berth 26, referred to as the "knuckle," by approximately 250 feet and reconfiguring the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) facility to the east.

If we do not undertake this construction, due to population growth and increased demands for commodities and cruise traffic, the volume of cargo throughput and the number of vessel calls to Port Everglades will decrease, as these large ships will use alternative ports that can accommodate them. The Port generated nearly \$28.1 billion in economic activity for Fiscal Year 2024, and the cargo and cruise sectors supported over 204,300 jobs. This level of financial contribution and employment support will be eroded if the port cannot remain competitive.

Benefits/Expected Outcome

The current location of the USCG Station Fort Lauderdale creates a chokepoint in the ICW which prevents cargo ships and large cruise ships from simultaneously and safely transiting to and from the southern part of the Port. PENIP will construct a new facility for the Station, allowing the ICW to be widened by 250 feet. The Fort Lauderdale USCG Station Site was established in 1968. The facility was last renovated in the late 70's.

The project includes a robust minimization and adaptive management plan, seagrass and mangrove mitigation, and a variety of monitoring plans and science-based environmental and restoration activities to ensure that the unique South Florida nature environment and marine wildlife are protected for the duration of the construction process.



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During the past fiscal year, 661 petroleum ships called on Port Everglades. The tankers that deliver about 12.5 million gallons of petroleum products to Port Everglades have grown to Aframax size and provide one-third of the energy that keeps the Sunshine State on the move, and in the air. Port Everglades has extensive facilities to support regional cement requirements. Domestic supply of limestone is “drying up”; increasing imports of Canadian stone and aggregates to serve Florida highway, residential housing and commercial construction demands. These commodities are delivered to the port in heavily laden Supramax, Hydramax or Panamax Bulk carriers. Cement is projected to reach 2.6-million-ton capacity by 2036, growing from 1.2 million in 2023.

Over \$1B in public and private investment has been or is being expended at Port Everglades to take advantage of the deeper and wider navigation channels. Port Everglades is the third-largest cruise port in the world. It is the homeport for many of the world’s largest cruise ships, with lengths of nearly 1,200 feet, passenger capacities of up to 6,300, and crews of more than 2,000. Port Everglades is projecting more than 4.4 million cruise guests sailing in 2025. 50% will arrive in Florida by air. In 2023, the average cruise passenger surveyed reported regional spending averages of \$288 on lodging, \$134 on food and beverages, and \$450 on other expenses, including tours, entertainment, transportation, and gifts.

While the BO is a critical step forward, there are many more steps before construction can begin. We may need to enlist further help from our supporters, stakeholders, and Congressional Delegation if the USACE disagrees with the BO, or if the BO is delayed beyond the time allocated for the review process.

Point of Contact

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